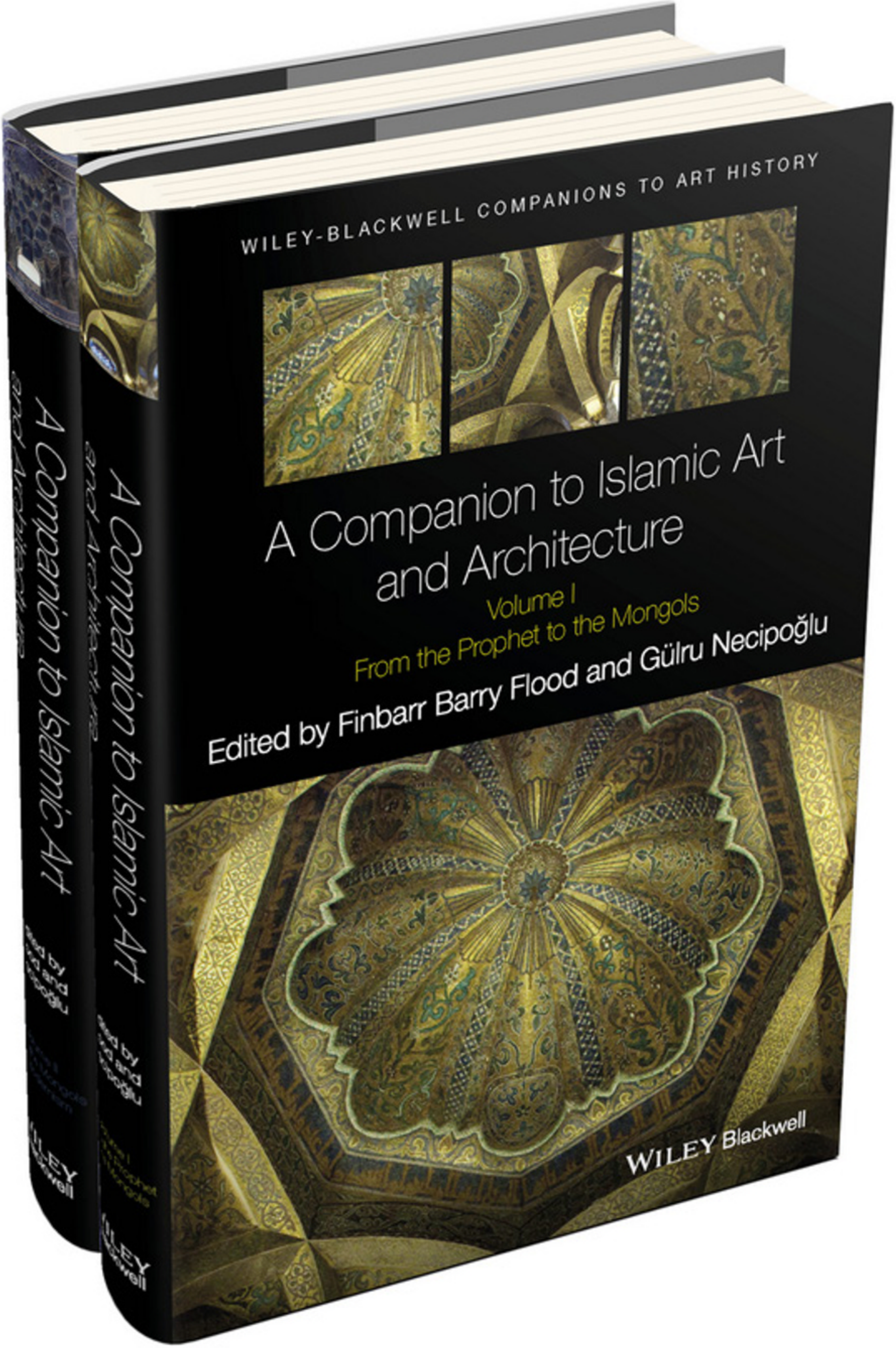

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A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture

Volume I

From the Prophet to the Mongols

Edited by Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu

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A Companion to
Islamic Art and Architecture

Volume I
From the Prophet to the Mongols

Edited by

Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu

WILEY Blackwell

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Sites in Islamic Territories, edited by Mohammad Gharipour (2014). She is currently working on a book-length project, tentatively entitled *Building the Caliphate: Construction, Destruction, and Sectarian Identity in Fatimid Architecture (909–1131)*.

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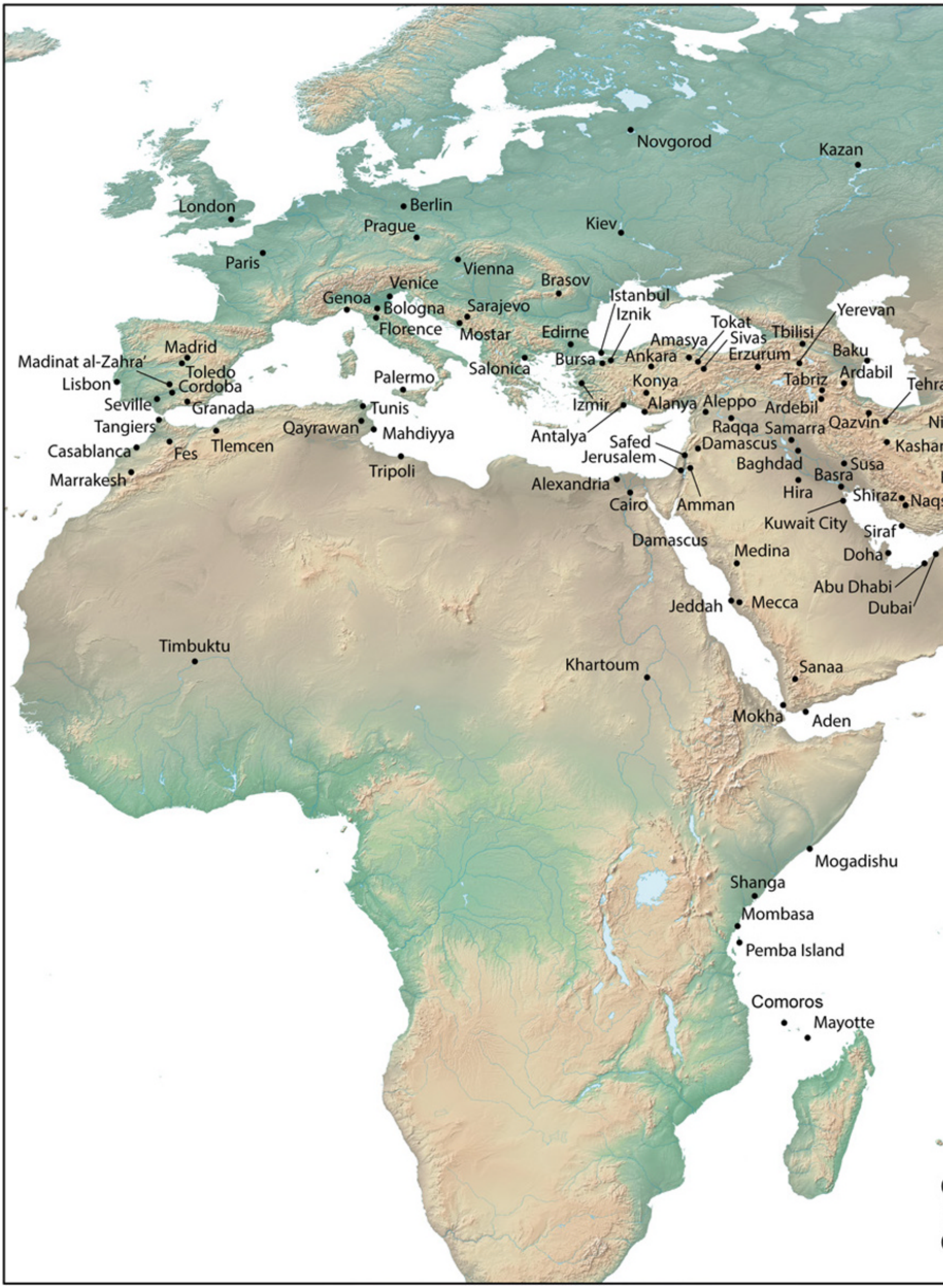
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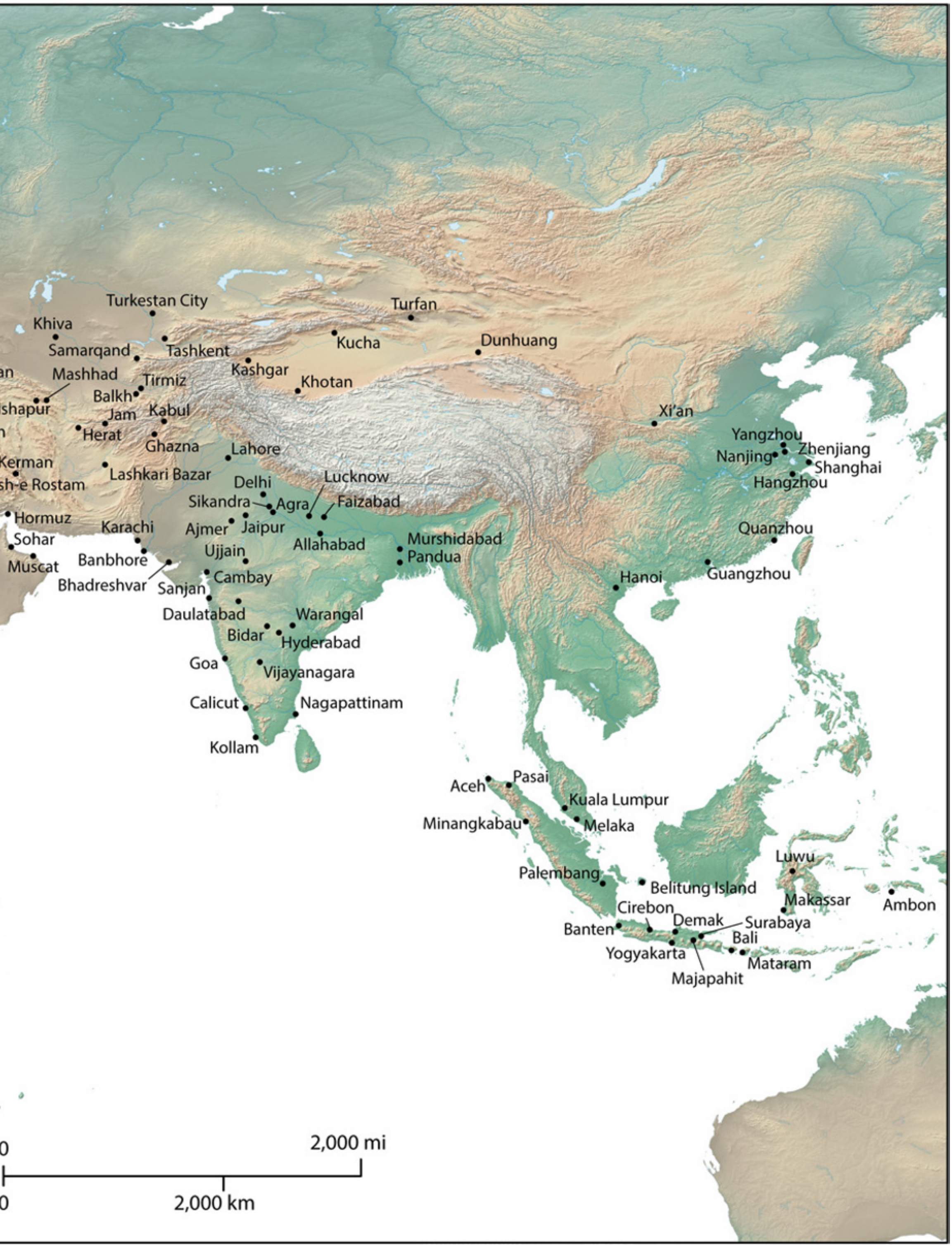
Map of commonly cited cities.
Source: Map prepared by C. Scott Walker, Harvard Map Collection.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Introduction to Both Volumes of *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*

1

Frameworks of Islamic Art and Architectural History: Concepts, Approaches, and Historiographies

Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu

The Rationale for the Two Volumes of *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*

In a short article published about 50 years ago, the historian S.D. Goitein made an impassioned plea for the notion of a singular Islamic history to be abandoned in favor of a more fragmented approach that obviated "*the danger of abstracting a general picture of Islam which never was a historic reality.*" Goitein argued the need for periodization to recognize a diversity obscured by the assumption that "continuity" could be equated with "uniformity." Suggesting that it was "only the European prejudice or legend of the immovable East as well as insufficient familiarity with the sources, which induced people to take Islamic civilization as a single unit stretching with only insignificant variations" from the time of the Prophet to the present, Goitein was confident that identifying this problem would open the way to a closer and fuller examination of each period. Recognizing the presence of "definitely distinct phases," yet rejecting an alternative taxonomic division along dynastic lines, he proposed to divide Islamic history into four major periods that constituted "organic units" ranging in time from the year 500 to the present, periods that corresponded to four distinct "civilizational" epochs. Even though Goitein admitted that periodization is most valuable when one is aware of its "limited validity," this did not necessarily diminish its value. In fact, rather than

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a merely didactic device he regarded periodization as nothing less than a "scientific prerequisite."[1]

The specific scheme proposed by Goitein has its problems, to which we shall return below, and the proposal was largely ignored by subsequent scholarship. Nevertheless, the issue that he sought to address, whose solution was to be found "along the lines of periodization," has haunted the study of Islamic art and architecture since its inception as a uniform field in the late nineteenth century. Until today, almost every survey book begins with a paradoxical attempt to deconstruct the term itself. The problem of where to locate Islamic art stems, at least in part, from the peculiarities of an invented rubric that must accommodate a vast array of artistic production spanning nearly 1400 years and straddling all continents. Moreover, if artistic appreciation fulfills some of the cultural functions of religious adulation, then the position of Islamic art is particularly fraught, with the qualifying adjective caught between a religious and cultural-civilizational identification. The resulting ambivalence is reflected not only in the lengthy apologias that accompany its use but also in the tendency to oscillate between media-based and dynastic taxonomies with ethnic or regional parameters.[2]

Many of these qualities were manifest in a myriad of new survey books of Islamic art and architecture in English published in the United States and Europe between 1991 and 2009.[3] The artifacts, manuscripts, and monuments imaged and represented within these texts show a remarkable coherence in terms of their chronological and geographical range, a coherence evident in the repetitious appearance of certain object types and even specific canonical works. Through consistencies in their inclusions and exclusions, these surveys may be seen as constituting and consolidating a canon, an "imagined community" of select monuments and objects that define the relatively new field of Islamic art history. There is for example a balance between architecture, painting, and the so-called minor arts, an emphasis on elite artistic production rather than material culture more generally, and on the central Islamic lands at the expense of the Islamic West (Maghrib), Sub-Saharan Africa, East and Southeast Asia. The works illustrated are those most readily accessible to European and American scholars, and they generally exclude from the canon any art produced in the Islamic world after about 1800; in effect, the end of Islamic art is made coincident with the advent of modernity. This exclusion reflects notions of authenticity that ignore the dynamic and heterogeneous constitution of "Islamic" cultures, while producing them as a foil through which the modern emerges as a distinctly European phenomenon.[4]

The boom in survey books on Islamic art and architecture over the past two decades has certainly done much to popularize the field and to provide much-needed basic teaching tools while satisfying an ever growing market. Yet despite their usefulness, survey texts are inevitably marked by idiosyncratic choices, inclusions, and omissions that shape their treatment of the material that they cover. Moreover, as the consistency with which they terminate the narrative of Islamic art at 1800 suggests, they often reinforce rather than engage critically with some of the historical peculiarities of the field. While acknowledging that the term "Islamic art" poses certain problems, survey books seek to consolidate its all-embracing framework and conspicuously shy away from criticizing the premises of the field's canon, which is the very basis of the traditional survey as a genre; to quote one critic, art historical surveys are often "popular codifiers and guardians of the canon … curious unions of aesthetics, pedagogy, and commerce."[5] The same framework informs allegedly "universal" collections of Islamic art in museums that complement survey books by visualizing the canonical narratives of art history for the general public, despite the contingencies that inevitably structure collecting practices.[6]

Noting these problems, many of us have felt the additional need for a type of intermediary text bridging the gap between the summary treatment permitted by the genre of the survey text and the more specialist preserve of the academic article and monograph. That need has been reiterated time and again by our students and in conversations with colleagues, both in our own and in other fields. Our two volumes directly respond to this perceived need.

The *Companion* volumes are envisaged as a collaborative project for remapping a relatively young and exponentially expanding field in an accessible format, while at the same time pushing the limits of existing scholarship in ways that we consider both desirable and productive. Although the importance of general surveys for pedagogical and reference purposes cannot be denied, what moves any art historical field forward is transformative studies that introduce new information, unknown visual and written sources, innovative interpretations, and critical perspectives. In the Islamic field, too, introductory surveys and more in-depth studies accessible to a wider audience need to inform one another in an ongoing dialogue. Consequently, in addition to introducing new approaches to canonical subjects and newly commissioned work on neglected regions and topics, the two volumes of *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* scrutinize some of the idiosyncrasies of the field.

The essays we have commissioned aimed to provide an opportunity for scholars to revisit and rethink subjects on which they have written in the past, with a view to articulating the wider significance of their research for a broader audience, while at the same time reassessing traditional wisdom in their historiography and proposing possible future directions. Equally, several of the essays included in the volumes represent innovative collaborative and comparative approaches to topics that are usually treated as discrete and distinct but which we believe could benefit from such experimental collaboration, in keeping with our broader objective of establishing lateral connections across the field. Others introduce regions and topics not usually covered in canonical histories of Islamic art and architecture.

Recent global events have galvanized interest in the themes and issues addressed by the essays in both *Companion* volumes, whose potential audience extends well beyond the Islamic field. We envisage that the volumes will provide an appealing source of information to a general educated audience, students, as well as academics. It is anticipated that the readership of these volumes will include Western medievalists, Byzantinists, South and East Asianists, Renaissance and Baroque scholars, and early modernists in general, as well as others working in such disciplines as anthropology, history, comparative literature, religion, and visual and cultural studies. In addition, the engagement with questions of periodization that are raised by questions of modernity, pre-modernity, and the concept of a contemporary "Islamic" art (albeit briefly) has the potential to involve those interested in modern and contemporary art. The expansion of the Islamic field reflected in these volumes has given rise in some circles to a nostalgic longing for the traditional unity of what has grown to be a frustratingly "unwieldy" field, a longing for inherited frameworks motivated by a fear of fragmentation that "threatens to pull our field apart so that there will be nothing left at all."[7] This fear may be understandable, given the increasing competition for limited institutional resources, but it runs the risk of fostering suspicion of, if not resistance to, the inclusion of "peripheral regions" or art produced after 1800 within the canon of Islamic art history, as well as marginalizing new interpretative and theoretical approaches.

In fact, the tendency to treat regions, dynasties, and media as if they were independent, hermetically sealed compartments in some surveys of Islamic art and architecture, with little attempt to articulate the internal or external dynamics of connectivity, has enhanced the much-lamented fragmentation of the field. By contrast, more specialized, problem-oriented publications produced over the last few decades have endeavored to counter the relative insularity of the field through an active engagement with multidisciplinary, transcultural, theoretical, and newly emerging interpretative approaches within the changing discipline of art history at large. It is mostly thanks to these methodological efforts to reinscribe the study of Islamic art within the broader discipline of art history, where we believe that it belongs, that the field is prospering, and is increasingly being integrated into a growing number of art history departments. These developments are directly related to processes of expansion and inclusiveness that, depending on the writer, have been seen as either promise or threat.

The practice of Islamic art history seems to be at a juncture in which the mounting interest in this field from a global perspective overlaps with a fear concerning its disintegration into uncontrollably diverse specializations, bringing along with it an increasing distance from the methods of traditional scholarship. Our volumes respond in part to these internal frustrations by fostering scholarly collaborations intended to emphasize the dialectic between diachronic and synchronic approaches, or between a regional focus and the need to consider how the local connects with translocal cultural flows, forms, and practices. The essays that they contain reinforce the interconnections within the field whose growth, we believe, need not necessarily be perceived as a threatening source of weakness but rather as a sign of strength. Since it was never fully unified, we see no mounting danger in the field's further enlargement. Instead, its transformation into a loosely interconnected, multifocal and multivocal arena of inquiry can be seen as a mark of its coming of age.

As a landmark collaborative enterprise by leading experts of Islamic art and architecture, it is hoped that the *Companion* volumes will play a positive role in mending unnecessary rifts and growing factionalism in the field through promoting a multiplicity of equally viable viewpoints. To this end, many of the essays are co-written, products of collaboration between two scholars, an innovation designed to highlight the need for multiplicity, multivocality, and the sharing of different kinds of expertise. This also underlies our emphasis on connectivity and a reconceptualized periodization aimed to reformat the field's chronological structuring principles (see below).

In this respect, the analogy with Western art, which is likewise divided into numerous subfields requiring both specialized and general knowledge, seems particularly germane to the perceived "unwieldiness" of the field of Islamic art history. Prior to the emergence of the modern discipline of art history in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, there was no indigenous tradition either in Christendom or Islamdom for studying either "Western" or "Islamic" art in holistic fashion, as all-encompassing universal fields. It may well be argued that the term "Islamic art" is not too different from the category of Western art, an equally "unwieldy" field with a frequently contested label for which no better substitute has been agreed upon.[8] The chronological span and geographical extent of Islamic art is as vast as that of Western art, both of them spanning all continents, unlike other geographically more limited millennial artistic traditions. The parallels call into question the persistent search for particularistic answers to "what is Islamic art," a question that is hardly ever asked about Western or Christian art whose spatio-temporal boundaries are equally murky.[9]

Despite its acknowledged problems, no satisfactory alternative has emerged to replace the ambiguous appellation "Islamic" art. "Islamicate," a term coined by Marshall Hodgson in the 1970s to denote the adoption of cultural forms that originated in the Islamic world, independent of religious identities, is gaining increasing acceptance, especially among scholars concerned with the intercultural reception of artistic forms and practices that originated in the Islamic world.[10] In spite of increased attention to regional forms and practices in the study of Islamic art and architecture, there seems to be a general consensus that the diverse visual cultures grouped under this rubric do belong together in many ways. The challenge, then, is to account for transregional and transtemporal aspects of artistic production in the Islamic lands while also accounting for historical and regional differences.

Apropos the contested name of the field, a curious but illuminating episode is the short-lived bilingual journal in French and Ottoman Turkish published in Paris in 1898 by the collector-dealer Hakky-Bey, titled *Le Miroir de l'art Musulman* (Mirror of Muslim Art), or, *Mirʾāt-i ṣanāyīʿ-i Islāmiye* (Mirror of the Arts of Islam).[11] The use of the label "Islamic" in this journal and in an earlier trilingual monograph published in Istanbul (in Ottoman Turkish, French, and German) for the International Vienna Exhibition in 1873, officially sponsored by the Ottoman sultanate that claimed the universal caliphate, complicates the assumption that this term was merely an invention of European Orientalists.[12]

Historically, the field has tended to lurch between extremes on the issue of its label and other contentious matters. The issue was thrown into high relief when the Metropolitan Museum in New York reopened its galleries of Islamic art in 2011, renamed as *Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia (ALTICALSA)*.[13] This move from the unifying concept of an Islamic art to more fragmentary ethnic or regional taxonomies stood in contrast to the universalist aspirations or pretensions of encyclopedic museums. Yet it might be seen as a reversion to earlier periods in the history of the field when terms such as Arab or Persian art preceded the more universalizing categories of "Muhammedan" or Islamic art. In this case, however, the marginalization of the problematic adjective was also informed by questions of geopolitics and sponsorship, galvanizing a historical unease with the religious implications of the "Islamic" in Islamic art, considered further below. Regardless of its motivation, the move to a more fragmentary regional taxonomy begs the questions: What is the thread running through the art of all of these regions that might relate them? If there is no relation between them, why does the art produced in all of these diverse regions have a dedicated gallery, why is it shown together?

For many scholars, the answer to such questions lies in a need to acknowledge the dialectic between transregional and regional, as well as diachronic and synchronic artistic forms and practices, a productive tension that accounts for geography and history while acknowledging the persistence of certain artistic forms and cultural practices across time and space. In fact, it could be argued that the need to negotiate between the local and the translocal, the lived experience of the quotidian and the ideal of an imagined community (*umma*) with a global reach, has been a consistent feature of Islamic cultures. Unless someone comes up with a truly brilliant, prize-winning alternative, it seems more than likely that we will not abandon the field's conventional rubric, which is a "brand name" shared with other branches of Islamic studies. Indeed, not everyone is so unhappy with this name, for the concept of Islamic art is deeply entrenched in museums and private collections as well, in addition to its increasing political deployment as a cultural mediator in the international arena.

The Structure of the Volumes and their Reconceptualized Periodization

Focused primarily on the Middle East and the medieval period until the 1980s, Islamic art history has by now expanded to encompass regions and periods traditionally excluded from the canon. By incorporating essays on previously omitted geographies, such as East and Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan as well as East and West Africa, and the Americas, the *Companion* volumes acknowledge the current state of scholarly practices with a life of their own. The volumes aim to provide a fuller understanding of the global interconnectivity of Islamic art and architecture, with its diverse fusions of transregional and regional elements. This wide-lens cross-cultural perspective intersects with the current global turn in the discipline of art and architectural history, as reflected in the hiring preferences of departments and graduate student applications expressing a preference to work across and between the traditionally fixed boundaries of specialized fields.

Informed by critiques of Eurocentrism and colonialism, this trend has triggered a notable shift away from the former totalizing conception of civilizations/cultures as self-contained and unified entities, in favor of exploring their permeable boundaries, hybridity, diversity, and cosmopolitanism. The new stress on connectivity and mobility certainly resonates with contemporary multidisciplinary debates, favorable or not, on the present global world order: debates to which Islamic art and architecture has much to contribute, given its copious interchanges with the arts of Europe, Asia, Africa, and more recently America.[14] Although the present emphasis on porous cultural borders and malleability relates to the complex interactions that constitute the contemporary world, bringing into greater focus the global aspects of Islamic arts is not merely fashionable. It is an intrinsic and central characteristic of the field itself: a field crisscrossed by internal and external networks of exchange that are emphasized in the *Companion* volumes. At the same time, the essays acknowledge the importance of not ignoring local conditions, forms, and practices in favor of an exclusive emphasis on circulation and mobility. Consequently, many of the authors are concerned with intersections between the lateral flow of artistic forms and the vertical sedimentations and stratigraphies, rooted in traditions that shape specific modes of expression or reception.

This dialectical approach is not confined to questions of spatiality or spatial relations, it also includes questions of temporality that are closely tied up with our emphasis on periodization. The inclusion of post-1800 art and architecture in the second volume is in keeping with the ever growing interest in the modern and contemporary periods in the wider discipline of art history. Although debates about the appropriateness of the terms "Modern Islamic art" or "Contemporary Islamic art" mirror those surrounding the use of the term "Islamic art" itself,[15] the integration of these periods into the field's expanded canon opens new vistas on the nature of modernity and contemporaneity, and on what constitutes the global and local. Currently most historians of Islamic art are medievalists or early modernists, with little expertise in modern and contemporary art. It is true that interest in these later periods is growing among Islamicists, but it is not yet clear how that interest will be served within a discipline that has traditionally equated visual modernity with Euro-America, and carefully partitioned the modern from the pre-modern. Debates about how exactly to situate the study of the modern and contemporary art of the Islamic lands are ongoing. Therefore, rather than prejudge the issue, the final section of the *Companion* volumes includes specially commissioned essays that reflect the loci of current interest, while articulating some of the discussions and tensions around the question of Islam, art, and the contemporary. We remain convinced that the modern and contemporary would require a separate volume or volumes of their own, especially since comprehensive surveys of the subject are only recently starting to appear, supplementing the proliferation of articles or catalogue essays.[16]

The inclusion of the modern and contemporary forms part of a commitment to rethinking the periodization of the field, an endeavor that structures both volumes of *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*. In keeping with our belief in the need for a plurality of approaches and voices, the periodization that we envision is not meant to be an inflexible straightjacket or to enforce new taxonomic orthodoxies. It does, however, engage the problem of choosing between dynastic and regional taxonomies. The basic division of the two volumes is structured around the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258. That event is widely accepted as marking a watershed in the development of Islamic art and architecture, even if its impact on artistic production has sometimes been overstated. After 1258, new formal, iconographic, and stylistic paradigms were established, among them the introduction of chinoiserie in the eastern Islamic lands unified under the Mongols. The bipartite division adopted in the pair of *Companion* volumes has the practical advantage of facilitating their combined use with the two Pelican survey volumes of Islamic art and architecture based on the same chronological division (650–1250, and 1250–1800).[17] Those surveys provide the basic descriptive encyclopedic background information for the more extended essays and critical approaches introduced in our Blackwell volumes.

The revised edition of the first Pelican volume, co-authored by Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Medina, adopts a geographical organizing principle with an emphasis on the western Islamic lands. This mode of organization stresses regional characteristics at the expense of synchronic unities and varieties across different geographies, and tends to underplay paradigmatic shifts in chronology brought about by radical changes of regime. An exception is made for Fatimid art, which is treated as a dynastic rather than regional category. On the other hand, the second volume, co-authored by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, downplays geographical factors in favor of a chronological scheme, ordered under generally dynastic rubrics. The authors explain that they have given special emphasis to the arts of Iran, thereby accepting the canonical view that Islamic art was primarily Arab in its formative stage and overwhelmingly Persian thereafter. By contrast, coverage of the western Islamic lands, and North Africa in particular, occupies far less space, which is true of many of the recent survey books. The relatively summary treatment of the Maghrib in Anglophone scholarship is a reminder that the legacy of colonial “spheres of influence” continues to resonate in modern scholarship; until today, the vast majority of published work on Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia being Francophone.

While the bipartite chronological division of the two *Companion* volumes reflects standard practice, the nuances of the subdivisions within each volume propose, in effect, a new periodization for Islamic art and architecture. Within both volumes four further chronological subdivisions attempt to articulate the distinctiveness of major artistic and geopolitical developments during the more than 600-year span accommodated under each of the two broad pre- and post-Mongol rubrics. These subdivisions are accompanied by our brief introductions to each period, outlining the main cultural, artistic, and historical developments.

Spanning one to two and a half centuries, each subdivision constitutes a relatively coherent time zone characterized by specific configurations of regions and polities extending throughout the Islamic lands. By combining temporal with artistic, cultural, geographical, sociopolitical, and spatial factors, these subdivisions are intended to counter the idea of Islamic art and architecture as a singular and uniform entity. As such, they fulfill a function not unlike that of Goitein's differently conceptualized "distinct phases," forming "organic units" intended to destabilize the alleged unity of Islamic history. Our subdivisions are also envisioned with a view to counterbalancing the predominance of diachronic approaches in the field of Islamic art, which tend to construct imagined geographical–artistic continuities within modern national territorial boundaries by deliberately downplaying differences, ruptures, and intercultural artistic exchanges. The tendency to read the past through the optics of present-day national geographies has long obscured transregional synchronic unities and interactions with neighboring lands and non-Muslim subcultures within pre-modern Islamic polities, much as the comprehensive term "Islamic art" has afflicted the field with its tenuous universalism.[18] Our aim in adopting this fourfold periodization in each of the two volumes is to acknowledge difference and diversity, while also highlighting interconnectivities that constitute artistic networks that may or may not conform to taxonomies based on dynastic or regional criteria.

We found a chronologically guided organizational concept preferable for our purposes than an alternative thematic scheme that is increasingly employed in survey books of Islamic art and architecture, museum installations, and pan-Islamic thematic symposia.[19] Themes are certainly useful parametric devices in art historiography so long as they are properly historicized. Yet themes singled out in studies of Islamic art tend to be idiosyncratic, often reinforcing stereotypes about its presumed basic common denominators, thereby perpetuating ahistorical notions about the essential "character" or "spirit" of Islamic art and architecture. To that end, thematic approaches in the field generally deploy diachronic investigations revolving around the topos of unity in variety, or variety in unity.

Our concern with periodization reflects the problems with the term "Islamic art" discussed above, but it also intersects with a current interest in questions of periodization in the discipline of art history more generally. In 2008, for example, a special issue of *Perspective*, the house journal of the Institut nationale de l'histoire de l'art in France was dedicated to "La périodisation en histoire de l'art"

(Periodization in the History of Art). Acknowledging that periodization is essential for the art historian, contributors to that volume considered its pros and cons, along with the problems raised by the necessity for the discipline to encompass a global dimension that brings with it the need for a kind of "geohistory," combining the coordinates of space and time. Periodization is a complex tool with obvious, and somewhat arbitrary limits; it implies discontinuity and thus poses historical questions of continuity and change as well as agency.[20]

Because periodization may vary according to vantage point, we recognize the need for elasticity and do not insist on a single canonical model. Our matrix of periods is not incompatible with alternative pre-existing chronologies, named differently and comprising smaller or larger chronological units. What we do insist upon, however, is the necessity of periodization as an essential tool for acknowledging difference and change across geographies and temporalities, a tool that provides an antidote to the persistence of ahistorical approaches to Islamic art history. Paradoxically, another advantage of periodization is its potential to offset the professed fragmentation of the field by promoting lateral links, "connective tissue" between otherwise separate subfields of Islamic art history, which form enclaves of scholarship that rarely engage in conversation with one another.[21] Establishing more clearly defined periods of specialization may also counteract the field's perceived tendency toward entropy, and eventual dispersal, by formally acknowledging that no single person can be expected anymore to be equally proficient in all phases of Islamic art, as Oleg Grabar frankly admitted in a survey of the state of the field published in 1983:

> the artistic experience of the Muslim world in over 1,400 years is too rich, too varied, and too complex to lend itself to a single message, a single voice, or a single explanation. No one person can master its intricacies with the accuracy and commitment it deserves, and it would be a betrayal of its history to limit it to one formal system or to one set of explanations.[22]

The periods under which the essays of the *Companion* volumes are grouped comprise coherent yet flexible spatio-temporal matrices, with geographically and chronologically fluid boundaries. Each period represents changing modalities of human and nonhuman agency, with continually reconfigured constellations of Islamic visual cultures. These configurations can be conceptualized as interlinked networks of communication and exchange, with ever shifting urban centers of artistic production (whether royal or not) within which the parameters of unity and diversity were negotiated and historically reformulated. According to this dynamic model, no single unified Islamic art existed at any one time as a self-contained static entity created by peoples or polities with fixed identities. Instead, one may conceivably posit shifting identity strategies at work and successive processes of artistic formation and re-formation operating diachronically.[23]

Within each of the chronological subdivisions that structure both volumes, the changing dynamics and ongoing formative processes of Islamic art have been explored through essays comprising a multiplicity of intersecting narratives and multifaceted mappings of time, space, artifacts, society, religion, culture, and the agencies of specific actors. A "top–down" model privileging the patronage of dynastic rulers and elites has been counterbalanced by "bottom–up" forces, taking into consideration the tastes of urban middle classes and various subcultures, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, as well as production in urban craft and court workshops. These inquiries firmly anchored in time and space are based on a close engagement with visual and written sources. Needless to say, there are obvious thematic, regional, and media-based connections between some essays contained under separate periods, which can be read in conjunction with one another by those interested in pursuing the diachronic threads that weave together the two *Companion* volumes.

The first volume titled "From the Prophet to the Mongols" is subdivided into the parts corresponding to the following four periods: (I) The Early Caliphates, Umayyads, and the End of Late Antiquity (650–750); (II) Abbasids and the Universal Caliphate (750–900); (III) Fragmentation and the Rival Caliphates of Cordoba, Cairo, and Baghdad (900–1050); (IV) "City States" and the Later Baghdad Caliphate (1050–1250). The second volume, in turn, is titled "From the Mongols to Modernism" and subsumes parts correlated with the following quadripartite periodization: (V) "Global" Empires and the World System (1250–1450); (VI) Early Modern Empires and their Neighbors (1450–1700); (VII) Modernity, Empire, Colony, and Nation (1700–1950); (VIII) Islam, Art, and the Contemporary (1950–Present).

Where our eightfold periodization differs from that of Goitein mentioned above is his more reductive division into four periods that completely elide the early modern era. Goitein's scheme begins with two shorter periods (500–850 and 850–1250), after which there is an unusually protracted intermediate period of stasis spanning 550 years (1250–1800),[24] which then culminates in the modern era, or a period defined as "1800–Present, Transition to National Cultures, mainly inspired by sources other than Islam." Goitein's omission of the early modern period reflects a now outdated view that Islamic civilization continued to be medieval until the modern epoch, with no Renaissance and Reformation of its own, eventually losing its vitality as a declining civilization that was finally transformed by "Western impact."

It has been claimed that "one can speak of a unified [Islamic] civilization and art" for the pre-Mongol period, but not later on when it "becomes more difficult to speak of a single Islamic art."[25] Because of this common assumption the post-Mongol era has traditionally posed a distinct challenge to more systematic analyses of the modalities of continuity and change through periodization. The spatio-temporal matrices that organize essays in the *Companion* volumes complicate that assumption by altogether dissolving the pre-1250 unity paradigm, and by introducing in the second volume four coherent periods with a tighter and more integrated treatment. As such, the truly radical changes that appeared after 1250 become a matter of degree, rather than a complete breakdown requiring an entirely different or atomistic approach.

Conversely, the periodization adopted here is also intended to address a relative lack of subtlety in the conceptualization of the early modern period. This is telling indeed, as the art historiography of the early modern period has undergone unprecedented development over the last two decades, with the modern and contemporary periods recently beginning to follow suit. It is such discrepancies in established schemes that the reconceptualized periodization we propose in the *Companion* volumes seeks to remedy.

Foundations and Historiography of the Field

Belief that Islamic cultures exist in a time of their own (or even outside of time) is one of the main factors that motivated the traditional segregation of Islamic art and architecture from coeval post-medieval periods in surveys of global art history (particularly Renaissance to contemporary). This denial of coevalness is evident in surveys of world art not only in the omission of Islamic artworks produced after 1700 or 1800 but also in the anachronistic medievalization of masterpieces from the early modern period. Thus the latter works are often relegated to a chapter on the Middle Ages, instead of appearing where they belong chronologically; namely, in the Renaissance and Baroque periods that are exclusively defined in terms of Western European styles.[26]

Whereas the late antique and medieval periods have traditionally been treated as coeval with their counterparts in the Western tradition (Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic), integrating early modern Islamic art into the Eurocentric historiographies of global art history has posed a major problem. That problem is embedded in the questionable nineteenth-century view that the classical Mediterranean artistic heritage, shared in common by early and medieval Islamic art, became the exclusive preserve of Europe after the Renaissance. At the root of the problem is the traditional conceptualization of Renaissance humanism as marking a major cultural break between Christian Europe and its Islamic neighbors, a unique *sui generis* phenomenon that inaugurated modernity only in the West. The idea is only recently being questioned in revisionist studies by Europeanist scholars who attempt to “reorient” the Renaissance between East and West.[27]

These studies have done much to remedy some of the problems highlighted here, but they tend to focus on the relations between Europe and one or more non-European cultures. As a result, Europe and the Renaissance remain firmly entrenched at the heart of contemporary scholarship, with its strong focus on early histories of the “global.” While the participation of the Islamic world in the “Renaissance” can no longer be doubted, the global resonances of Islamic art and architecture outside of its relation to Europe both before and after 1250 need more sustained study. Under the Abbasid caliphate, for example, merchants from Arabia, Iraq, and Iran were actively engaged in mercantile networks that connected China, East Africa, India, Indonesia, and the Middle East. Similarly, in the early modern period, Indian merchants and their agents traded in the Ottoman lands and Safavid Iran, while the manuscript cultures of the Horn of Africa, Arabia, Egypt, and Southeast Asia were marked by intensive mutual exchanges across remarkable distances; Europe's contribution to this network spanning thousands of miles lay simply in providing industrially produced paper.[28] These sorts of case studies are ongoing, and promise to broaden the horizons of the global well beyond its traditional Eurocentric focus.

A related issue has been the theorization of Islam as a civilization that is "intermediate," trapped in the "Middle Ages" between classical antiquity and its rediscovery by early modern European humanists. This leaves the art and architecture of Islam (if not Islamic cultures in general) permanently fixated on and unable to transcend their avowed creative zenith in the medieval period. One of the leading proponents of that position was Carl Heinrich Becker (d. 1933), the renowned Orientalist scholar and Prussian minister of culture who institutionalized Islamic studies in Germany and founded the still influential journal *Der Islam*. Becker's paradigm of world civilizations was progressive in its integration of Islam into Europe, but only as the "middle link" of global history. In his hierarchical ranking of civilizations Becker placed Islam below Europe and above Africa, assigning to it a central position in world history as the mediator between East and West. Although following the lead of earlier Germanophone scholars such as Alois Riegl (d. 1905) in acknowledging the shared Hellenistic-cum-late antique roots of Islamdom and Christendom during the Middle Ages, Becker regarded Renaissance humanism as marking a permanent cultural break between Western Europe and the Islamic world. This perspective was echoed in the primarily medieval Islamic collections of the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, inaugurated in 1932, after being housed since 1904 at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (now the Bode Museum). The Pergamon Museum's Islamic wing occupies a physically intermediary position between ancient archaeology and the Bode Museum's late antique to medieval collections, which culminate in the modern period. In this way, it quite literally performs the central mediating role allocated to Islamic art at that time.[29]

The idea of Islamic art as a medieval art is therefore profoundly engrained in the field's self-definition, which has consistently privileged formative origins over processes of historical development. The early medieval period in the heartland of the Fertile Crescent has customarily been considered the "classical moment" when the norms of typically Islamic art allegedly became codified in the ninth century, leading to the assessment of works from later periods as derivative regional variants, an idea underlining the pervasive idea of unity in variety. This perspective can be correlated with the "golden age" and "decline" paradigms advanced by text-based Oriental studies that glorified the ninth century as the highpoint of "classical" Islamic civilization, which thereafter entered a long period of decline after fulfilling the useful service of transmitting the classical Greek heritage to Europe via Arabic translations.

The protracted decline was generally correlated with the fragmentation of the Abbasid caliphate, the challenge posed by Shiʿi dynasties such as the Fatimids, the eventual political ascendancy of the Seljuq Turks in the eleventh century, followed by a succession of Turko-Mongol dynasties with Persianate cultural affinities in the eastern Islamic lands, and the last artistic glories of medieval Arab civilization manifested in Mamluk Syria and Egypt on the one hand, and in Nasrid Spain and the Maghrib on the other. According to this school of thought, by the early modern period (often conflated with the modern era), Islam had sunk into an inexorable state of backwardness only to be rescued by more advanced European powers. Even the traditional geographical scope of the field of Islamic art history roughly corresponds to the specialization of European Orientalist scholars on the medieval Middle East, with its three leading languages in hierarchical order (Arabic, Persian, and Turkish) that resulted in the marginalization of other relevant languages (such as Amharic, Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Hebrew, Urdu, Sanskrit, Mongolian, Chinese, Malay, Swahili, or Slavic, to name a few).

Closely allied to the "golden age" and "decline" paradigms, which informed the periodization of Islamic art history, is the dialectic of continuity versus innovation. The filiation of Islamic art and architecture with the heritage of Hellenism in late antiquity was a productive paradigm for theorizing the formation of Islamic art.[30] However, the recent shift in historiography from a model of relative rupture to uninterrupted continuity is not entirely satisfactory, since it fails to account for the agency of an Umayyad contribution to the art of a "long late antiquity."[31] The assessment of continuity versus innovation is ultimately dependent upon differences in approach and the impossibility of an ideal framework, given the diverse and disparate nature of the Islamic field. In the study of the early Islamic period the dialectic between continuity and innovation, or diversity and unity, is directly related to questions about where and when a distinctive Islamic art emerges, what its defining features might be, and the perennial question: What is "Islamic" about Islamic art? This in turn is connected to the larger previously mentioned tendency for scholarship on (and constituting) Islamic art to swing between two extremes, from the ahistoricity and potential essentialism of the term "Islamic," to the secularism of ethnically and regionally inflected historical categories.

As is well known, interest in Islamic luxury goods and material culture in the West goes back to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, amplified from the fifteenth century onwards by increased mobility and the circulation of prints and travel literature with the advent of the printing press. Nevertheless, serious academic study of Islamic art and architecture dates from the period of the Enlightenment.[32] From the eighteenth century onwards, European travelers and scholars began to collect and write about Islamic art, both from first-hand experience of Islamic lands and from the random selection of coins, metalwork, and paintings in European collections at their disposal. The question of attitudes to images often crops up in these early studies. In 1721, for example, the topic of painting among the Turks and Persians was treated at length in a *memoire* by the

French royal geographer Bourguignon d'Anville.[33] A more imaginative exploration of images in Islamic societies, written by the Venetian Abbé Toderini, appeared in French (translated from the Italian) in 1789, and was frequently cited thereafter. The essay is particularly interesting for having been inspired by the Abbé's acquisition of an illustrated Ottoman copy of the *Tarīkh-i Hind-i gharbī* (The History of the West Indies), published in 1730 by Ibrahim Müteferrika (d. 1745), a Hungarian convert to Islam who ran a celebrated printing press in Istanbul. One of the first illustrated printed books in Ottoman Turkish, the text was accompanied by 12 woodcut illustrations in which both men and animals of the Americas were depicted.[34]

Despite these pioneering studies, it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that a combination of Orientalist scholarship, colonialism, archaeology, the rise of the museum and ephemeral exhibition, and even the department store spurred the emergence of more concerted and systematic approaches to the study of Islamic art and architecture. Studies on the historiography of the field have amply documented its origins at the interstices of Oriental studies and philology, epigraphy, numismatics, archaeology, museology, collecting and the art market, with art history being a relative latecomer.[35] This is not the place to repeat the detailed genealogy of that trajectory, yet it must be strongly emphasized that the study of Islamic objects and monuments was central to the development of the wider discipline of art history as a whole, particularly in Austria and Germany. Relevant figures include the likes of Alois Riegl, whose post as curator of the carpet collection of the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna spurred an interest in ornament that found expression not only in a much-neglected book on Islamic carpets but also in a series of path-breaking books on late antique, medieval, and early modern ornament. These challenged the prevailing orthodoxies within the nascent discipline of art history by arguing for continuity and transformation, rather than decline, between the arts of classical antiquity and Islam, a topic that continues to resonate in modern scholarship.[36] Those who followed Riegl's lead included Wilhelm von Bode (d. 1929), Friedrich Sarre (d. 1945), Ernst Herzfeld (d. 1948), Ernst Kühnel (d. 1964), Kurt Erdmann (d. 1964), and Richard Ettinghausen (d. 1979), scholars who initiated a sophisticated appreciation of Islamic art and architecture through archaeological explorations within the Ottoman territories, as well as studies on the "arabesque" and ornament, the applied arts, and particularly carpets.[37]

Ettinghausen, a museum assistant participating in the installation of Islamic collections at the Pergamon Museum before immigrating to the United States from Nazi-controlled Germany, was the main catalyst in linking the tradition of art historical scholarship in German-speaking countries with the emerging Islamic field in his new habitat. He and his younger colleague, Oleg Grabar (d. 2011), who was educated in France and the United States, have unanimously been hailed as the two leading doyens of the field in American scholarship. Their predecessor Mehmet Aga-Oglu (d. 1949), a scholar, curator, professor, and founding editor of *Ars Islamica* (published 1934–1951), who pioneered the establishment of that field during his 20-year career in the United States, was born to Turkish parents in Yerevan, Armenia, and educated in Moscow, Istanbul, Berlin, and Vienna. In Tsarist Russia, late Ottoman Turkey, Austria, and Germany he met and studied with some of the founding figures of the field, including Halil Ethem Eldem (d. 1938), Carl Heinrich Becker (d. 1933), Ernst Herzfeld (d. 1941), and Josef Strzygowski (d. 1941).[38]

The connections between these individual actors testify to the international cosmopolitan milieus within which the field initially flourished through a collaboration of "foreign" (primarily French and German) and "indigenous" networks of expertise. In addition to key German contributions to the early history of the field, other centers for the study and collecting of Islamic art complemented this early multinational core (especially the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, the Soviet Republics, Iran, Egypt, Syria, and South Asia), with Paris, London, and to a lesser degree New York constituting the primary centers for the art market initially dominated by Armenian dealers. Particularly after World War I, art historical scholarship proliferated in nation states with an Islamic visual patrimony, such as Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, India (and later Bangladesh and Pakistan), Spain, Italy (Sicily), and the Soviet Central Asian Republics.

Recently, the early historiography of Islamic art and architecture has become a lively subject of critical inquiry in its own right.[39] Thanks to these inquiries the ways in which trends in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States have shaped the development of the field are becoming increasingly apparent. This is especially evident in the pervasiveness of certain favored topics above others, among them some of the peculiar tropes of the field that we will discuss in the next section. A central topic of interest was the already mentioned shared late antique heritage of Islamic art with Christendom and Judaism.[40] In addition, some of the early interest shown in Islamic art was functional or utilitarian. Studies on the "arabesque," and more generally decorative motifs and ornament, constituted a consistent topos that was initially instrumentalized for improving the industrial arts in Europe, becoming widely emulated by practitioners of the Arts and Crafts movement, and later on of the Art Deco and Art Nouveau styles. Islamic arts and calligraphy subsequently captivated the imagination of avant-garde modernist artists interested in abstraction (a theme discussed further below), as well as modern and contemporary architects-designers.[41] As an offshoot of the fascination with the eternal arabesque and its roots in late antique prototypes, interpretations of the timeless unity, "character" or "spirit" of Islamic art too gained momentum.[42] So did the question of aniconism and the alleged Islamic prohibition of figural representation, as discussed below.[43]

The primacy of Near Eastern archaeology in early research firmly established the centrality of Islamic architecture and the so-called Islamic city in scholarship, along with the affiliated subject of the "paradise garden," part of an ongoing fascination with the theme of Paradise as an assumed trope in Islamic art.[44] With the agency of collectors and museums, subjects such as "Persian painting" eventually surfaced as subfields along with other media-based research on calligraphy, carpets, textiles, ceramics, glass, and metalwork. The reception of the "arts of Islam" in France at the turn of the twentieth century and the biographies of Parisian tastemakers have shown that the collections of the Musée des Arts Decoratifs were dominated by samples of "later Islamic art," which exercised a greater appeal to collectors than did the antiquarian tastes of Orientalist scholars, with their focus on early Islamic archaeology and epigraphy.[45] Media-based subfields were soon accompanied by studies focusing on particular ethnic or national artistic traditions with racial overtones. The teleological genealogies of Arab (Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi), Moorish (Spanish, North African), Persian, Indian, Turkish, and Central Asian art were subsequently complemented by monographic books on associated dynastic subcategories (e.g., Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamluk, Seljuq, Mongol-Ilkhanid, Timurid, Uzbek, Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal to name the more prominent examples).

The desire to account for the unity and variety of Islamic art by reference to ethno-religious character traits has occluded the complexity of transregional artistic production in Islamic lands constituted as multiethnic, multilinguistic, and multiconfessional polities before the advent of modern nation states. The intimate connection between colonialism and European Orientalist scholarship on Islamic art and architecture is a widely acknowledged factor that contributed to shaping the field's early historiography. While this is generally recognized, the almost simultaneous mirroring of concepts absorbed from European Orientalist scholarship in the early nationalist and pan-Islamist narratives of native scholarship in Islamic countries has only recently been exposed. Hence, Orientalist and nationalist paradigms were inextricably entangled in the art and architectural historiography of the Islamic field, produced by European and indigenous scholars alike.[46]

The legacy in postcolonial scholarship of divisions based on colonial era zones of influence is another factor that is not readily acknowledged. This includes the predominance of Francophone scholarship on North Africa and Syria, Anglophone interests in Egypt and India, and Russian scholarship on Central Asia, a division of labor producing scholarship that cleaves along cultural and linguistic fault lines. Although Iran and the Ottoman empires were not colonies, various overlays of colonial influence prevailed in both. The resulting fragmentation in scholarship brought about the sundering of North Africa from Spain, Egypt, and Syria; of India from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran; of Iran from Anatolia, Central Asia, and Afghanistan. The anti-Ottomanism of French and British colonial scholarship in areas seized from that empire contributed to the devaluation of Ottoman-Turkish art, until it was promoted as a legitimate field of study by the efforts of German and Austro-Hungarian art historians and their native colleagues, at a time when strong political alliances joined together these multinational empires.[47] Emerging forces of the art market also exerted a considerable influence on the ethnographic construction of a hierarchy of peoples and artistic traditions that came to privilege Persian art (seen as the product of an "Aryan" people) by the early twentieth century, resulting in the deliberate mislabeling of Turkish artifacts as Persian or Turko-Persian, and those of India as Indo-Persian.

Much like the Ottoman Balkans, Soviet Central Asia remained disconnected from mainstream scholarship on Islamic art and architecture, along with entire areas excluded from survey books, such as China, Mongolia, Indonesia, and Africa (with the exception of its northern strip). In short, the exclusions and subdivisions of postcolonial scholarship, accompanied by linguistic barriers, have played no small role in obstructing comprehensive studies on the global connectivity of Islamic visual cultures in formerly linked geographies, which constituted contact zones and spaces for intercultural interaction over the centuries. Some of the essays commissioned for the two *Companion* volumes address aspects of this legacy, providing diverse perspectives on their ramifications and focusing on underrepresented periods, regions, and topics.

Some Historical Peculiarities and Tropes of the Field

Favorite themes and topics of nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century scholarship continue to prevail among the historical peculiarities and tropes of studies on Islamic art and architecture. Here we briefly touch upon some of them, including the paradoxical treatment of religion, the role of written sources, the canonical position of epigraphy and archaeology, the primacy of architecture and the decorative or "minor arts," the emphasis on an assumed *Bilderverbot* (prohibition of images), and the prevalence of iconographic approaches to Islamic art.

A perennial problem inherent in the monolithic concept of Islamic art has been a dubious universalism, attributed to the common denominator of religion or religious culture. The treatment of religion, in turn, constitutes a central paradox in the field which oscillates between two poles of scholarship, from the secularism of historical frameworks to the ahistoricity of religious essentialism, namely, from the occlusion of religion to its elevation as the main determining factor of artistic production.[48] As we have seen, this oscillation is apparent in historical pendulum swings between ethnic or regional (and secular) categorization (Arab, Persian, or Turkish art) through the more universalizing "Islamic art" and back again. The question "what is Islamic about Islamic art?" has generated answers ranging from Islam as religion, to Islam as culture and civilization.

The culture–civilization perspective, which may or may not include a religious dimension, tends to be focused on issues of power politics, ideology, and royal patronage. What has only rarely been emphasized is the interface between the visual arts and contemporaneous trends in theology, legal theory, philosophy, the sciences, technology, literature, or music. One of the reasons for this striking segregation of artistic–architectural production from cultural–intellectual pursuits is the prevalent assumption that art-makers in the Islamic lands were mostly illiterate handworkers, cut off from the contexts of high culture intellectual environments that surrounded them; this despite the abundant signatures on medieval objects and monuments (contradicting an established trope regarding the reluctance of Muslim artists to sign their work) or evidence for medieval ceramicists composing the verses they inscribed on their works.[49] This modernist assumption about the autonomy of Islamic visual arts is sometimes compounded by the positivism of the field's traditional methods and the substratum of an anti-intellectual stance against interpretation or theory.[50]

The alternative response to the question "what is Islamic about Islamic art?" foregrounds religion as the pre-eminent component and motivator. What is understood by religion entails a wide spectrum of interpretation, sometimes tending towards an essentialism rooted in the idea of a timeless, unchanging, and monolithic Islam. At the other end of the spectrum is recent revisionist scholarship that questions conventional understandings of the historicity of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qurʾan and the Sunna and hadith. One advantage of such hardline revisionist approaches is that they have inspired debate and spurred a range of excellent scholarship on early Islam.[51] By contrast with this intense focus on origins, however, the impact of Sunni versus Sunni, and Sunni versus Shiʿi sectarianism on artistic production, has generally been marginalized by monolithic visions of an artistic tradition unified by Islam, while Sufism is largely neglected, although valorized.[52]

Unlike studies on medieval art in the Latin West or Byzantium that have routinely been contextualized by the use of historical sources on mysticism and theological controversies (Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or Protestant), interpretations of Islamic art hardly ever turn to juridical or theological texts that may shed light on the historicity of religious attitudes towards the visual arts in different times and places, other than standard hadith collections or the Qurʾan. A curious paradox of the field of Islamic art and architecture, then, is that while the term "Islamic art" suggests the centrality of religion, and while there has been a consistent fascination with the idea of Paradise among historians of Islamic art, there has been very little scrutiny or clarification of the nature of potential connections between artistic production and religious belief that goes beyond subjective judgments veering between the poles of secular humanism and ahistorical religiosity. Curiously, this is true even of the art historical treatment of the early development of mosques and the material Qurʾan (*mushaf*).

Arguably, the reluctance to make use of exegetical, juridical, and theological sources in order to understand artworks for which only few contemporary sources exist, reflects the historical origins of the field in a secular humanist milieu that was suspicious of religion in general, and religious Islam in particular. In addition, there has been a tendency among historians of Islamic art to perceive sources seen as religious as existing outside of history, and therefore incapable of providing the "hard" data privileged in the field. Despite this reticence, some recent studies of specific kinds of material forms and practices – among them early funerary architecture, mosques, medieval metalwork, and imported paper –have drawn liberally from both exegetical literature (*tafsir*) and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to excellent effect.[53]

The reluctance to engage with the widest possible range of primary sources is not only the product of an ambivalent attitude towards religion but also points to some historical peculiarities in approaches to textual sources more generally. In his 1951 essay on the state of studies on "Islamic Art and Archaeology," Richard Ettinghausen noted the division of the field into two camps whose methods should be combined: on the one hand scholars of Islamic studies without adequate visual skills, and on the other hand those well versed in stylistic analysis without sufficient command of textual sources. Thus, among the future agendas of the field, he highlighted the "need to study written primary sources so as to move beyond formal stylistic considerations to wider aspects of meaning and cultural context." A comparable contextual approach was promoted by Oleg Grabar, who emphasized the linguistic training of students in order to merge text-based and visual analysis common in other fields of art history. Thus in 1976, he recommended the compilation of repositories of documents and translations of primary sources among future priorities of the field.[54]

Despite this, and regardless of the fact that a vast array of potential primary sources has yet to be effectively marshaled for the study of Islamic material culture, a recent survey of the field asserts a preference for "traditional approaches" that "begin with the artworks themselves," attributing the shift of research to later periods since the 1970s to the greater availability of documentary evidence for those periods and to "the current fashion to privilege the text over the work of art itself," which requires "fancy footwork" to link written and visual sources.[55] However, in addition to the clear failure to capitalize on the widest possible range of sources for the medieval or pre-modern period, as in other fields, so too in the study of Islamic art the post-medieval period is naturally characterized by a larger number of written and visual sources. The extant artifacts and buildings are complemented by new genres of writing on the arts from the fifteenth century onward, especially in Persian and Turkish. Primary written sources in the Islamic lands that specifically concern the visual arts, such as biographies of calligraphers and painters, treatises on calligraphy, or on the lives of architects, emerge rather late during the early modern period as in Europe, which developed its own discourses on the arts from the Renaissance onwards. As for the medieval or pre-modern period, the written sources of the Islamic world are quite comparable if not richer than their Western counterparts, comprising a wide range of subjects such as aesthetics, biography, calligraphy, cosmology, geography, geometry, hagiography, *hisba* (a legal genre of market regulation that includes the arts and crafts), history, jurisprudence, legal endowments (*waqfiyya*s), literature, mathematics, metaphysics, music, philosophy, poetics, and theology.[56]

Many of these neglected potential sources have their own genre conventions that require specialist knowledge to navigate; conversely, those versed in the contexts and conventions of such sources are often unaware of their implications for the study of material culture. What is badly needed are more collaborative enterprises between scholars of material culture and texts. Perhaps an unexpected advantage of the current crisis in the funding of the humanities is that it will foster such collaborations across disciplinary boundaries, even if only for pragmatic reasons. One practical problem that has governed access to such sources is the frequent absence of published editions or recensions of key primary texts, let alone trustworthy translations. Recent initiatives to address this problem by publishing bilingual editions of major works are to be welcomed and may well change the nature of the source materials employed by art historians.[57] Typically, however, the same narrow range of texts available in translation in European languages has been endlessly recycled in art historical scholarship on the Islamic world, much as the same small coterie of canonical objects is consistently reproduced in illustrated survey texts. Rather than challenging the canon, or expanding its reach, such circumscription and repetition tends to reinforce the status quo, reducing the history of Islamic art to the objects and texts most accessible to (mainly Euro-American) scholars.

Instead of the paucity or proliferation of primary sources, the real issue seems to be the range of texts that scholars imagine to be useful, as well as questions of what one is looking for in texts, how one uses them, and whether or not they can shed light on the visual arts. The use of primary written sources was and still is generally limited to establishing facts concerning dates, provenance, and attribution, spiced with some anecdotal narratives. With a few exceptions, the immense corpus of medieval and post-medieval juridical, literary, and poetic sources remains largely untapped, thanks to the traditional emphasis on cataloguing and taxonomically classifying available artifacts. No wonder, then, that the field has been dominated by surveys, archaeology reports, and exhibition catalogues, as Oleg Grabar noted in 1976.[58]

One strand of scholarship on Islamic art to which the use of texts has been central is the search for meaning and symbolism, characterizing the work of many scholars in the post World War II period. At its best, this has inspired work that attempts to bridge the gap between things and texts; at its worst, it has resulted in crude essentialism, the idea of essential meanings attaching to “Islamic” artistic forms, regardless of where and when they occur.[59] Within the academy, the most common manifestation of this interest in questions of meaning is seen in the proliferation of iconographic studies in the second half of the twentieth century, largely focused on the content and meanings of images. In addition to their advantage of fostering the deployment of primary sources in attempts to understand the meaning of images for those who made and viewed them, such approaches can broaden the horizons of interpretation. However, it is doubtful whether any text can ever fully account for a building or object – for its materiality, scale, technique, and so on, which also contribute to its overall meaning. Moreover, the logocentrism associated with the privileging of texts as vectors of interpretation runs the risk of sidelining the agency of artists and craftsmen, especially in cases where the imagery under analysis diverges significantly from textual canons. A more significant issue arising from the application of the iconographic method to Islamic art is the fact that it was primarily developed in analyses of European figural art. While it has proved very useful in the study of figural imagery in Islamic art, scholars have differed markedly over the question of whether one can talk of an iconography of the nonfigural ornament that is so pervasive in Islamic art and architecture; this is an ongoing debate.[60]

A second strand of interpretation that has flourished in the field over the past few decades, and which was closely associated with the late Oleg Grabar, draws upon theories of language in its attempt to elucidate meaning in Islamic art and architecture. This semiotic approach, rooted in the study of signs and the ways in which they connote and denote in the production of meaning, has been especially prominent in the study of architecture and epigraphy.[61] A potential weakness is its abstraction of material forms and practices, their subordination to linguistic theories whose application is often characterized by a lack of historicity, and whose validity for the study of material phenomena has been debated. A strength of this approach lies in its recognition that all kinds of forms are capable of signifying, of conveying meaning, so moving the ground of interpretation beyond the rather narrow field of figural art.

Historians of Islamic art have generally not dealt well with questions of materiality. Epigraphy has, for example, been central to the study of Islamic architecture, yet until recently inscriptions were rarely read from the monuments on which they were placed but from modern printed compendia.[62] Their compilation was initiated in the 1890s by the Swiss master of Arabic epigraphy, Max van Berchem, and was geared towards the encyclopedic compilation of an additively growing *Corpus of Arabic Inscriptions* that was to be accompanied by an unrealized *Manual of Arab Archaeology*. The latter would have been arranged according to media, such as inscriptions, coins, seals, architecture, and the applied arts, from which van Berchem excluded the arts of the book and painting. Although the pioneering epigraphic compendia are immensely useful, when scholars access monumental inscriptions in published form, transliterated and printed according to the conventions of modern typography, they lose the ability to consider questions of material, placement, scale, script, and relationship to architectural spaces, questions that were no less integral to the meaning of an inscription than its semantic content, the nugget of data that it conveyed.[63]

This neglect is all the more surprising, since one of the persistent tropes in the study of Islamic art is that in their content, placement, and scale, monumental Islamic inscriptions, at least those found in mosques and shrines, fulfill the function of icons in Christian contexts.[64] Despite the ubiquity of this idea (which would bear much closer analysis than it has received), it is only recently that any attention has been paid to the content of religious inscriptions in Islamic architecture. The primary focus on historical inscriptions in the study of monumental epigraphy seems to have been informed by the perception of religious and literary inscriptions as mostly decorative rather than iconographically meaningful, a view that is no longer subscribed to by Islamic art and architectural historians.[65] Still, some peculiarities remain: while recent decades have seen increasing attention to the choice of Qurʾanic inscriptions in architectural epigraphy, less attention is paid to the presence of hadith (Traditions of the Prophet) even in religious architecture, and the potential choices that underlay their selection.

The traditional emphasis on "hard" data can partly be attributed to the role played by archaeology in the construction of the field and the constitution of its canon.[66] Excavations in the ninth-century Abbasid capital Samarra in the decades before World War I were especially influential, transforming what was previously known about early Islamic architecture, gardens, ornament, and urbanism; the results of these excavations continue to resonate in contemporary scholarship. Acknowledging the historical importance of archaeology, Ettinghausen and Grabar, who were among the first scholars to write state of the field essays in 1951 and 1976, respectively, titled them "Islamic Art and Archaeology." Ettinghausen stressed the "split personality" of the field's genealogy, oscillating between art history and archaeology, while Grabar observed a tension between the legacy of the two fields; his subsequent state of the field essay in 1983, titled "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art," dropped archaeology from the field's name.[67] Although archaeology has recently lost ground as a specialized subfield increasingly divorced from the wider discipline of art history, it continues to be an important component of the Islamic field.[68]

One of the legacies of the historical relationship to the discipline of archaeology is the prioritization of architecture, separated from the so-called minor arts in the study of Islamic art. This bifurcation is evident in the earliest examples of the manual format, which became the prototype of several handbooks on Islamic art and architecture. An early example is Henri Saladin and Gaston Migeon's, *Manuel d'art musulman*, published in 1907.[69] Comprising not just Arab but also Persian, Turkish, and Indian art, its first volume covered the privileged medium of architecture, with the second one dedicated to the decorative arts and painting. The updated edition of the *Manual*, published in 1927, could no longer cope with the expansion of information even though it was twice as large in size. The architectural volumes, written by Georges Marçais, covered only North Africa, Spain, and Sicily. The volumes on the arts written by Migeon, who was a curator at the Louvre's "objets d'art" department, capture the growing fascination with illustrated manuscripts, particularly what came to be known as "Persian painting." The "minor arts" and painting largely fell into the domain of museum curators, collectors, and dealers, unlike architectural history with its stronger academic connection to Max van Berchem's conception of archaeology and epigraphy.[70]

The taste for ornamental eclecticism among European collectors, dealers, artisans, artists, architects, and travelers has left behind a still vibrant legacy of deep appreciation of Islamic art, based on purely aesthetic criteria. The nineteenth-century aestheticization of the Islamic visual tradition facilitated its adoption in the West as a neutral transcultural model for the industrial arts and architectural design.[71] The abstract values of Islamic art, ornament, and calligraphy have also been and continue to be a rich source of inspiration for contemporary artists-designers and architects from both Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds in the increasingly globalized present.

The emphasis on the ornamental qualities of Islamic art and architecture is, however, related to the historical tendency to deny that ornamental forms could be imbued with any associated meaning. It is also closely allied to one of the most persistent tropes in the perception and study of Islamic art: the idea that Islamic art is a strictly aniconic art, or that the reflexive aniconism and iconoclasm of Muslims (the two are often conflated) spurred the compensatory development of calligraphy, geometric ornament, and vegetal imagery (especially the arabesque), since figural art was not an option. The idea of Islamic art as an art of aniconic abstraction is remarkably persistent, regardless of the vast array of figural art from the medieval and early modern Islamic world that appears in museum collections and survey texts. It is rooted in nineteenth-century conceptualizations of Islamic art and architecture as an offshoot of a late antique artistic heritage that was shared by Europe but that took a radical, aniconic turn, which some nineteenth-century scholars ascribed to the re-emergence of a "Semitic" distaste for figural art from under a veneer of Hellenism that had spread across the Near East with the conquests of Alexander the Great.

The question of aniconism and the image in Islamic art had been a topos in the writings of European travelers from the sixteenth century onwards, but the nineteenth century saw the issue incorporated into "scientific" discourses on the Orient and Orientals. Around 1860, the idea of an image problem in Islam and Judaism was reified by the coining of the German term *Bilderverbot* to name an assumed rejection of mimesis and figuration on the part of "Semitic" peoples (that is, Arabs and Jews) and, by not entirely logical extension, of Muslims in general. Within these racially inflected discourses, Arabs were distinguished from Persians. Writing in 1896, the Belgian scholar Victor Chauvin, paraphrasing the French Orientalist Charles Barbier de Meynard, noted that the triumph of the iconoclastic spirit in Islam followed from "the triumph of the Semitic element over the powerful current of ideas coming, directly in the case of the Persians, and indirectly elsewhere, from the Aryan spirit."[72] Thus, racial abstractions were mapped onto artistic forms. The convolutions of the arabesque – universally acknowledged as the distinguishing feature of Islamic art par excellence– could even be invoked as emblematizing the quasi-sexual threat of miscegenation posed by Oriental Semites to the legacy of Aryan Hellenic civilization in Europe.[73]

The invocation of the arabesque reflects the importance that ornament had assumed in late nineteenth-century debates about culture as an index of race. Islamic art was especially susceptible to the charge of ornamentalism, since it occupied an ambiguous role in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European debates on aesthetics and ethics. As early as the 1860s, two related but not entirely commensurate developments are discernible in French and German discourses on ornament that were to have a long-lasting impact on the perception of Islamic art. The first is the identification of the "arabesque" (a term coined in early modern Europe) not only as the epitome of Islamic art but also as the epitome of the ornamental. The second is the idea that the arabesque was symptomatic of a racially determined penchant for abstraction and an incapacity for mimesis or naturalistic representation, the appropriate goals of all artistic activity within a European tradition that claimed the classical tradition as its own. These debates on the causes and symptoms of the *Bilderverbot* were contemporary with the rise of European colonialism. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, to find the idea of an image prohibition in Islam being invoked by colonial officials in the Arab lands as symptomatic of the persistence of a medieval mindset that precluded the ability to modernize and progress under the aegis of colonial rule.[74] Conversely, it was scholars from the Arab world critiquing this reductive and racialized strand in Orientalist scholarship who pioneered the use of juridical and theological sources for providing more complex histories of attitudes to images in the Islamic world.[75]

This is a largely forgotten history, but one with striking contemporary resonances for a Europe presently convulsed over issues of migration and assimilation, in which attitudes to images are once again being deployed as a touchstone of difference, as witnessed in recent controversies around caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.[76] Moreover, understanding this longer European historiography is important for understanding some of the more idiosyncratic tropes of the field. Among the more peculiar clichés of Islamic art, for example, is the idea of the horror *vacui*, the idea that artists in the Islamic world had an instinctive horror of empty space, owing to which they packed as much ornament onto the surface of artifacts and buildings as possible. The most sustained exploration of this purported phenomenon offers the hypothesis that those whose urban centers were separated by menacing deserts internalized a fear of the threat posed by these wide open spaces, and hence developed a compulsion to leave no empty spaces in their artworks.[77] Whether seen as amusing, sinister, or quirky, it is important to acknowledge that these kinds of interpretations are deeply rooted in broader art historical debates about art, environmental determinism, and mentalité that were current in the early twentieth-century continental milieu from which many of the pioneering scholars of Islamic art hailed.[78]

One further aspect of the idea of the *Bilderverbot* and its legacy to contemporary perceptions and representations of Islamic art is the consistent emphasis on abstraction as a core value of Islamic art, whether presented as reflecting a racial predisposition, the impact of an image prohibition, or both. As noted above, in European scholarship of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the abstract qualities of Islamic (with the possible exception of Persian) art was generally seen in negative terms. However, with the rise of abstraction as a positive aesthetic value in Euro-American art of the pre-World War II period, it became valorized as an expression of spiritual transcendentalism. The recognition of transhistorical abstract values was consolidated in the move from ethnic categorization (Arab, Persian, Saracenic, and so forth) to more unitary terms such as "Muhammedan" and eventually "Islamic." The radical decontextualization of the whitewashed gallery space was itself a further abstraction initiated in *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst*, the ground-breaking 1910 exhibition of Islamic art in Munich, whose pared down aesthetic attempted to combat the perception of this visual tradition as an art of bazaar crafts and decadent ornamentalism.[79] The mode of display pioneered in Munich represented a shift from a quasi-ethnographic presentation to one which appeals to the formal qualities of the work. It was precisely the eschewal of questions of context and iconography that enabled the selective "elevation" of Islamic artifacts to sit alongside the canonical works of Euro-American modernism on the leveling ground of formalism.

The valorization of the perceived abstract qualities of Islamic art is part of a broader twentieth-century phenomenon in which the experience of abstraction constituted a period taste. This gave rise to a feedback loop, whereby the reception of pre-modern visual cultures around the globe as precocious arts of abstraction was informed by a modernist vogue for abstract art, which in its turn had been partly conditioned by the experience of pre-modern artistic traditions.[80] As the century wore on, many of the works produced by modern artists who had looked to the arts of the Islamic world for inspiration came to be displayed alongside examples of Islamic art. "Abstraction" (however conceived) has thus served consistently in twentieth- and twenty-first-century-art historical writing, museums, and exhibitions to bring examples of pre-modern Islamic art into constellation (more rarely, dialogue) with modern and contemporary Euro-American art.

It is often unclear what exactly is being suggested by these kinds of juxtapositions. Even where a common genealogy is asserted or implied, this is often in tension with somewhat vague notions of affinity.[81] More importantly, affinity is often produced by the omission of figural works in order to reinforce the central message that Islamic art was an art of abstraction in which the canonized trinity of the vegetal arabesque, calligraphy, and geometry predominated. The reinforcement of this polarity between aniconism and figural art in presentations of Islamic art ignores innovative attempts on the part of medieval and early modern artists and patrons to reconcile desires for figural art and piety that modern scholarship often assumes were incommensurate.[82] Equally significant is the fact that, with the occasional exception of one or two token works by contemporary artists from the Islamic lands working in "traditional" idioms, comparison almost always entails the juxtaposition of *pre*-modern Islamic art with the work of modern Euro-American artists, establishing not just spatial but temporal difference, a denial of coevalness that avoids awkward questions about authenticity and global modernism(s) (or even modernities).[83]

Recent Developments in the Study of Islamic Art and Architecture

Over the past decades, the field of Islamic art history has become much more self-reflexive, not only in questioning canons and practices formerly taken for granted but also in expanding its "frontiers" with work on new geographies, periods, concepts, and approaches. A major growth area of recent scholarship is a concern with the history and historiography of the field itself, including the formation of collections, exhibitions, and museums, as well the role of collectors and dealers in shaping tastes and the Islamic canon.[84] Such developments are necessary and welcome, but if they are not accompanied by new fieldwork and research intended to expand or reformulate the boundaries of the canon, run the risk of transforming the study of Islamic art into a meta-field of inquiry.

Conversely, other recent studies respond to a current return to the object, the classic arena of traditional connoisseurship, revalorized by the augmented prestige and growing number of museums that have turned into the new cultural icons of the global world economy. The range of formal analysis has, however, extended to include nontraditional questions of agency, from that of materials and techniques to producers and consumers. The creative use of written sources and archival documents, and closer attention to inscriptions has further enriched the realm of object studies by providing insights into the biographies of artifacts, as well as the production of associated value and meaning. These responses to broader disciplinary trends are closely related to contemporary discourses of the global and globalization in the disciplines of art history and anthropology, and a current move away from iconographic approaches towards a growing interest in questions of agency, materiality,and subject–object relations.[85] Most recently, "thing theory" has propelled the phenomenology and sensuality of objects to the center of art historical analysis, thus challenging the previous domination of "representation" and the "power of images" with analyses of the affective and efficacious dimensions of the object. More than "image culture," it was "object culture" that occupied center stage in Islamic art and architecture. Hence, this field promises to provide fertile ground for the rising interest in material culture and portable objects, including luxury manuscripts and textiles.

The dynamic interactions between human subjects, inanimate objects, and multisensory architectural environments, which mutually constitute one another, are increasingly being explored by Islamic art historians. Indeed, the material from the Islamic world is especially well suited to such lines of inquiry, which have focused on phenomena ranging from "speaking" objects to the ingestion of Qurʾanic texts for healing or medicinal purposes.[86] Also represented in recent scholarship are the topics of gift exchange and conspicuous consumption, subjects located between the disciplines of art history, social history, and museology.[87] The theme of portability has been at the forefront of object studies, which explore the circulation and translation of artifacts, together with their currency in cross-cultural exchanges, diplomacy, and trade. This interest in portability reflects another major development: an interest in circulation, reception, and the art of cultural frontiers, both within and without the Islamic world, topics addressed by several essays in these *Companion* volumes.[88]

An exciting new internal frontier concerns research on the pre-Islamic heritage of South Arabia, whose contribution to the formation of early Islamic visual culture was overlooked or minimized in the past.[89] At the same time, scholarship on the formative period of Islamic material culture has proliferated: our understanding of the early history of the material Qurʾan (*mushaf*) in particular has improved greatly as a result of this development.[90] Other studies are also exploring such internal frontiers as Sunni and Shiʿi artistic sensibilities, interrogating the very idea of a distinctive Shiʿi art, and the ways in which intra-Sunni disputes may have informed artistic production.[91] At the same time, we have seen excellent studies of inter-sectarian Shiʿi–Sunni patronage, which complicate our understanding of the relationship between artistic practice and religious belief still further.[92] All of this constitutes a departure from the recent past, when studies on the modalities religious difference were almost anathemized as if perpetrating a betrayal of the field's coveted pan-Islamic unity. Such studies have even been criticized as "sectarian interpretations" that "often tell us more about the investigator than the investigated."[93]

Questions of *convivencia* (cohabitation, coexistence) and sharing within the multiconfessional Islamic domains are ever more examined, with a special focus on the Iberian Peninsula.[94] These investigations have borne remarkable fruit and helped to foster scholarship that crosses traditional boundaries, but they can sometimes be problematic in their tendency to emphasize commonalities over alterities, regionalisms, and the untranslatable, flattening the complexities in highly contoured cultural landscapes. In other disciplines we are already beginning to see a backlash against celebratory narratives of sharing and translatability that is likely to inflect future scholarship on Islamic art.[95]

Growing analysis of artistic relations between Muslim and non-Muslim groups is likewise typical of new studies on other frontier regions including medieval Syria-Egypt (Syriac, Coptic), Balkans-Anatolia (Latin Christian, Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Jewish), Iran (Armenian, Georgian), Sicily (Latin Christian, Greek Orthodox, Arab-Muslim) and South Asia (Buddhist, Hindu, Jain). Related topics are the ways in which the Islamic tradition of Iberia provided paradigms for the *Reconquista* of Spain and the colonization of the New World, as well as the translation of "Mudéjar" visual culture in the Americas.

New frontiers of the Islamic field include formerly uncharted parts of Africa, China, India (especially the Delhi Sultanates and the Deccan), the Indian Ocean littoral, Indonesia, and Malaysia.[96] Studies on Yuan and Ming China as well as the Mongol Ilkhanate in Iran–Iraq and Anatolia occupy an especially prominent place, highlighting the role of the Ilkhanid dynasty as a major catalyst in cultural and artistic exchanges between the central Islamic lands and Yuan China.[97] The substantial rise of studies on India and China is thus beginning to counterbalance the traditional focus on the Mediterranean world with new horizons stretching to the Indian Ocean and East Asia.

This is paralleled by an exponential growth in the field of Mediterranean studies, and the concomitant realization that the Islamic world participated in major early modern and modern cultural horizons, previously seen as phenomena specifically limited to Christian Europe. Because the Renaissance and early modernity were once conceptualized as exclusively Western phenomena, the intensification of post-medieval exchanges between European and Islamic art was formerly only explored in a few specialized studies of artistic "influence," often underestimating the agency of patrons or artists and overlooking questions of reception. New studies of transcultural exchange in the early modern Mediterranean world have launched frameworks going beyond the passive "influence" paradigm to an exploration of more dynamic interactions informed by theories of cross-cultural translation and transculturation.[98]

This trend not only reflects the growth of the Islamic field beyond its medieval perspective but also a reciprocal shift in European Renaissance studies since the 1990s. The reframing of Renaissance visual culture has had a major impact on reassessing the global interactions of early modern European visual culture with the New World and the Islamic lands. Thus, it is increasingly being recognized that the mutual Roman–Byzantine architectural heritage of the Mediterranean, which had played an important role in the formation of early Islamic art, continued to mediate the shared histories of European and Islamic art long after the medieval period. The renewed early modern conversation of Ottoman court culture with the classical and Byzantine visual heritage of the Mediterranean, which was being reinterpreted concurrently in Renaissance Italy, has constituted one of the fruitful venues of inquiry.[99] The newly emerging trend of integrating early modern Islamic art and architecture within Renaissance and Baroque art history therefore constitutes a significant departure from earlier paradigms.[100]

An allied trend in art historical scholarship is the increasing concern among Byzantinists with the life of post-Byzantine visual culture after the 1453 fall of Constantinople, both within Europe and the Ottoman Empire.[101] The interconnection between the Protestant Reformation and the Ottoman world is just beginning to emerge as a rich subject, as is the long-distance conversation between the Ottomans and the New World.[102] It has even been argued in some studies that the competitive identities and religious orthodoxies of the Catholic Habsburg, Sunni Ottoman, and Twelver Shiʿi Safavid empires were fashioned dialogically in the sixteenth century, an age of confessionalization and imperial polarization.[103]

This dialogic dimension is also reflected in recent work that reflects a temporal extension of the canon into the modern period. Art historical studies of the Islamic world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have, for example, proliferated over the past decades.[104] Many of these studies have engaged with the receptivity of the Islamic world to artistic forms and practices developed in contemporary Europe and elsewhere, but they have also tried to redress the balance, highlighting the reciprocal nature of this receptivity and the enthusiasm for Islamic art and architecture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe.[105] The phenomena came together in the promotion of neo-medieval architecture in the nineteenth-century Islamic world, often under the aegis of European architects whose vision of medieval Islamic architecture was shaped by contemporary Orientalist art.[106]

These new developments in the study of Islamic art and architecture and its historical connectivities are invariably shaped by current discourses of the global and, perhaps less obviously, by contemporary geopolitics and the pressures that they exert, directly or indirectly, on the study of this field at an important turning point in its history. In addition to the two Gulf Wars, Israeli wars on Gaza and Lebanon, the turmoil of the Arab Spring and its aftermath, more recently the so-called Islamic State (IS) has implemented a radical policy of destroying holy shrines and mosques (both Shiʿi and Sunni) as potential icons and sources of idolatry, forbidden by Islam. This development was foreshadowed in 2001, when the Taliban regime of Afghanistan destroyed the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan by using dynamite and artillery. In both cases, these new self-proclaimed iconoclasts broadcast their feats globally through the contemporary media.[107]

Against this background, over the past decade or so, major museums in Cairo, Copenhagen, Detroit, Doha, Paris, London, New York, and other cities have installed or reinstalled their Islamic collections.[108] As the framing of many of these new installations suggests, Islamic art and architecture is increasingly being co-opted as a “cultural ambassador” a balm for the “clash of civilizations” deployed to counteract negative representations of Islam in the media and other international public forums.[109] Given the proliferation of such representations in the decades after 2001, this is an understandable impulse. However, it is questionable whether art produced centuries ago can speak directly to current concerns, even where it provides a window of understanding into the cultural values that shaped its production and collection. More importantly, the instrumentalization of the material past risks reinforcing narratives of fallen greatness, the idea that Islamic cultures had their heyday long ago and are mired in a decline that can only be remedied by American or European intervention.[110]

Another way in which contemporary economic and geopolitical trends have shaped developments in the field is reflected in the foundation of new Islamic art museums by Muslim patrons in Kuwait, Sharjah, Doha, Abu Dhabi, and Toronto, the commissioning of signature architects to create prestige monuments of contemporary Islamic architecture, and the establishment of awards and educational programs to promote the practice and study of Islamic architecture and the arts. Ettinghausen predicted this phenomenon in his 1951 state of the field essay, where he observed the potential of Islamic art for the self-promotion of the Muslim world, albeit in an unintentionally derogatory tone:

> Since this is its one cultural achievement widely accepted and admired by the West, a rededication to it can compensate the East to a certain degree for its scientific and technological retardation, something which neither the oil fields, nor strategic location can achieve. Be that as it may, there has been and still is no better ambassador of good will than art.[111]

Although the proliferation of institutions providing public access to spectacular collections of Islamic art is a very welcome development, there is the danger of a growing chasm between the instrumental simplifications of populist messages and the sophisticated complexity of interpretations advanced by cutting-edge academic scholarship. Whereas earlier pioneers of Islamic art often held positions in both museums and universities, one of the challenges for contemporary academics and curators is to forge dialogues between approaches to Islamic art that are invariably shaped by different institutional demands and expectations.

Conclusion

The past two decades have been among the most dynamic in the history of the field of Islamic art and architecture, a field that emerged in close dialogue with the nascent discipline of art history itself. These decades have witnessed the flourishing of new approaches, methods, and scholarship which have reconfigured the canon of “Islamic art and architecture,” a rubric that has often been taken to refer to everything from the House of the Prophet in seventh-century Arabia to the latest Shirin Neshat video.

The chronological range of the canon has come under pressure from both ends, from work on the origins and earliest phases of Islamic art to ongoing debates about whether or not the modern and contemporary art of the Middle East and beyond can or should be accommodated within the canon of Islamic art, which was largely constituted by medievalists, so that most surveys of Islamic art come to a screeching halt sometime around 1800. At the same time, the geographical limits of the canon have expanded to accommodate regions that lie on the traditional margins of the Islamic world but whose artistic traditions are rich in material capable of contributing to the study of connected histories that has flourished over the past decades. In short, we have seen the flourishing of diversity within a field that, as currently constituted, eludes easy definition.

These developments take place against the much-vaunted rise of the global, which may in fact have exacerbated Eurocentric imbalances within the discipline, reinscribing traditionally privileged fields within the heart of the discipline, at the very moment when discourses of the global and the expansion of canons seemed to threaten the supremacy of Western art. In the field of art history, as it has developed over the past few decades, the increasing emphasis on the global has been consistently associated with two striking phenomena. First, a push towards the early modern, modern, and contemporary at the expense of earlier, or even longue durée histories. Second, the reinvention of Europe itself with its centrality to the recuperation of histories of circulation, mobility, and transculturation, thereby producing a new improved, bigger, better, apparently more connected, cosmopolitan and inclusive model of European art history.[112] This often comes at the expense of a vision of cultural history that is truly global in its spatio-temporal sweep and its attention to the multidirectionality of cultural flows, their historical constitution and impacts, including those to which Europe is entirely irrelevant. As the essays commissioned for these *Companion* volumes suggests, the art and architecture of the Islamic world is rich in material capable of documenting such phenomena and addressing some of the historical inequities that have shaped the development of the discipline as a whole.

We do not insist that the global turn in the broader discipline of art history should make globalization a new requirement in the Islamic field. Nor should the enrichment gained by expanded frontiers lighten the Islamic field's traditional centers of gravity and specializations. As Mike Featherstone has argued with reference to Roman cultural history, "If there is a global culture it would be better to conceive it not as a common culture, but as a field in which differences, power struggles and cultural prestige contests are played out. Something akin to an underlying form which permits the recognition and playing out of differences."[113]

It is from such a multifaceted relational perspective that questions of global connectivity and regional specificity within the field of Islamic art history are approached in these volumes. Pioneering studies that expanded the frontiers of this field have shown that studying artistic concepts and artifacts which cross frontiers requires several specializations to elucidate exchanges in multiple directions, rather than from a single cultural standpoint. Here lies the challenge of creating more nuanced shared histories of Islamic art and other traditions. That challenge means that new generations of art historians will have to develop greater familiarity with several visual traditions because, after all, transcultural exchange is by definition reciprocal, even if asymmetrical. This requirement is entirely in keeping with the vision of the two founding forefathers of the Islamic field in the United States. Ettinghausen (1951), for instance, specifically underlined "the need to overcome the insularity of Islamic art and archaeology from pre-Islamic and contemporary civilizations which exerted an influence on it." Likewise Grabar (1976) listed the relationship with neighboring or earlier traditions as a subfield of Islamic art history.[114]

In 1983, Grabar went a step further by suggesting that the underdevelopment of the Islamic field posed a distinct advantage for the advancement of innovative methodologies and theories that may be relevant for other areas as well: "The novelty of the field and the variety of its present directions can contribute in uniquely striking fashion to an understanding of both Islam and the arts or material culture in general."[115] Predicting the future directions in which the field of Islamic art history and its relevance for other areas might develop is not easy. Yet in the spirit of Grabar, we believe that the diverse and rich body of material accommodated under the absurdly capacious rubric of "Islamic art and architecture" is well capable of engaging contemporary concerns and interests within and beyond the discipline of art history, while initiating dialogues and trends (in the best sense) within it.

Notes

1 S.D. Goitein, "A Plea for the Periodization of Islamic History," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968): 224–228, emphasis original. The epochs in his periodization were 500–850 "Arabism and Arabic Islam"; 850–1250 "The Intermediate Civilization"; 1250–1800 "Institutionalized Islam, mostly non-Arab civilizations"; 1800–Present, "Transition to National Cultures, mainly inspired by sources other than Islam."

2 *Perspective: La revue de l'INHA*, 4 (2008). On periodization and the term "Islamic", see Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches," in *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber, and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi, 2012b, pp. 57–75). Electronically reproduced in the *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012): special issue on the historiography of Islamic art and architecture, guest edited by Moya Carey and Margaret S. Graves (arthistoriography.wordpress.com/(accessed 4 February 2017)).

3 Post-1990 surveys of Islamic art and architecture include Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1991). Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *Islamic Arts* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997); Robert Irwin, *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Literary World* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1997); Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: H.F. Ullmann, 1999); Marcus Hattstein and Peter Delius, *Islam: Art and Architecture* (Cologne: Könemann, 2000); Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Medina, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650–1250* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); Bernard O'Kane, *Treasures of Islam: Glories of the Muslim World* (London: Duncan Baird, 2007a); Bernard O'Kane, *The World of Islamic Art* (Cairo: American University Press, 2007b). Also see entries on Islamic art edited by Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom in *The Dictionary of Art* (New York, 1996), reprinted as *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

4 Finbarr B. Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art," in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*,

ed. Elizabeth C. Mansfield (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 31–53, reproduced online in the *Journal of Art Historiography*, 6 (2012) (arthistoriography.wordpress.com/(accessed 4 February 2017)). See also Nasser Rabbat, "What is Islamic Architecture Anyway?" and Avinoam Shalem. "What Do We Mean When We Say '"Islamic Art"'? A Plea for a Critical Rewriting of the History of the Arts of Islam," in the same digital publication.

5 Robert Nelson, "Living on the Byzantine Borders of Western Art," *Gesta* 35/1 (1996): 3–11, on p. 4. See also his "The Map of Art History," *Art Bulletin*, 79/1 (1997): 28–40.

6 See the essays in Junod, Khalil, Weber, and Wolf, eds, *Islamic Art and the Museum.*

7 Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field," *Art Bulletin*, 85/1 (2003): 152–184, quotation on p. 178; see also pp. 156–158, 175–176. Reproduced electronically in the *Journal of Art Historiography*, June 1, 2012, vol. 6 (arthistoriography.wordpress.com/(accessed 4 February 2017).

8 For the argument on the parallelism between the categories of "Western" and "Islamic" art, see Necipoğlu, "The Concept of Islamic Art." For debates about the Western canon, see the special issue "Rethinking the Canon," *Art Bulletin* 78, no. 2 (1996): 198–217.

9 Islamic art is often considered unique because it is not confined to a region, a dynasty, a nation, an ethnic group, a period, or a style. Islamic art is most easily defined by what it is not, "neither a region, nor a period, nor a school, nor a movement, nor a dynasty, but the visual culture of a place and time when the people (or at least their leaders) espoused a particular religion." Consequently, the field of Islamic art is viewed "as a curious anomaly because … it is neither a period nor a style, it is not restricted to one country or region," Blair and Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art," pp. 153, 155. See also a variant of this definition by Oleg Grabar in "Islamic Art, I. Definitions," *Dictionary of Art* 15 (1996): 99.

10 Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization,* vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 59. For the use of the term in a case study of intercultural reception see Phillip B. Wagoner, "'Sultan among Hindu Kings": Dress, Titles, and the Islamicisation of Hindu Culture at Vijayanagara," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55/4 (1996): 853–855.

11 Deniz Türker, "Hakky-Bey and His Journal *Le Miroir de l'art musulman*, or, *Mirʾāt-i ṣanāyī-i Islāmiye* (1898)," *Muqarnas* 31 (2014): 277–306.

12 The 1873 Vienna Exhibition catalogue is discussed in Sibel Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu, "Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist and Nationalist Legacies in the Architectural Historiography of the 'Lands of Rum,'" in Bozdoğan, S. and Necipoğlu, G. (eds), *Historiography and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the "Lands of Rum," Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 1–6. This date is earlier than the first documented use of "Islamic art" in Europe, in an exhibition organized by the Czech architect Franz Schmoranz in Vienna in 1876: Mercedes Volait, "L'art islamique et la problème de périodisation," *Perspective: La revue de l'INHA* 4 (2008): 101. See also the essay by Rémi Labrusse in the second of these *Companion* volumes.

13 Nasser Rabbat, "What's in a Name? The New '"Islamic Art"' Galleries at the Met," *Artforum* 50/8 (2012): 75–78.

14 See the essays, including Avinoam Shalem's, "Dangerous Claims: On the 'Othering' of Islamic Art History and How it Operates within Global Art History," in the special issue on the contents and discontents of global art history, entitled "Universalität der Kunstgeschichte?" *Kritische Berichte: Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 40, no. 2 (2012): 69–86.

15 See, for example, the panel "What is Contemporary Islamic Art?" sponsored by AMCA (Association for Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran, and Turkey) at the annual conference of the College Art Association, New York City, February 14, 2015.

16 While publications on modern art abounded in Middle Eastern languages since the early twentieth century, among the pioneering art historical publications in English are Wijdan Ali, ed., *Contemporary Art from the Islamic World* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 1990); Wijdan Ali, *Modern Islamic Art : Development and Continuity* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997); Nada Shabout, *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2007); Nada Shabout, Wassan al-Khudhairi, and Deena Chalabi, *Sajjil: A Century of Modern Art (Dawhah, Qatar)* (Milan: Skira. Distributed in North America by Rizzoli International Publications, 2010); Talinn Grigor, *Contemporary Iranian Art: From the Street to the Studio* (London: Reaktion, 2014).

17 Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650–1250*; Blair and Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800.*

18 For a critique of national discourses, see Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu, "Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist and Nationalist Legacies." and other articles in *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 1–6, a special issue on the proceedings of the 2006 symposium "Historiography and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the 'Lands of Rum,'" organised by both authors.

19 For a thematically organized survey, see Hattstein and Delius, *Islam: Art and Architecture*. Examples of thematic displays, accompanied by dynastic-cum-geographical schemes, include the Islamic art museums in Doha (Qatar) and Cairo, and the redesigned Islamic galleries of the Louvre Museum. For the proceedings of a theme-based biennial symposium series in association with the Qatar Foundation in Doha, the Biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art, edited by Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, see *Rivers of Paradise: Water in Islamic Art and Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); *And Diverse are their Hues: Color in Islamic Art and Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); *God is Beautiful and Loves Beauty: The Object in Islamic Art and Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

20 Differing criteria for schemes of periodization in art history, including political, geographical, cultural, and artistic, are discussed in *Perspective: La revue de l'INHA*, 4 (2008). The chronology of Islamic art, with its problematic omission of the modern period, is discussed in that volume in Mercedes Volait, "L'art islamique et la problème de périodisation." An example of a recent global history of architecture based on a timeline model is Francis D.K. Ching, Mark M. Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash, eds, *A Global History of Architecture* (Hoboken, NJ.: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2007). For a global approach to early modern and modern architecture see also

Kathleen James-Chakraborty, *Architecture since 1400* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

21 Oleg Grabar underscored the need to "improve contacts between many sub-fields of study or regions" in "What Should One Know About Islamic Art?," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003): 5.

22 Oleg Grabar, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art," *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 1–14, cited from p. 12.

23 For alternative schemes of periodization see Gülru Necipoğlu, "Shifting Paradigms in the Palatial Architecture of the Pre-modern Islamic World," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 3–27; and "The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited discourses and new approaches." The latter essay proposes four longer time zones, named according to common categories coined for Western history to facilitate a more effective integration of the Islamic field into coeval periods of global art history: (i) 650–*c.* 1050, late antique and early medieval; (ii) *c.* 1050–1450, medieval and late medieval; (iii) *c.* 1450–1800, early modern; (iv) 1800–present, modern and contemporary.

24 This more than half a millennium, labeled "Institutionalized Islam, territorial, mostly non-Arab civilizations," is defined in somewhat negative terms as a time of "military feudalism" when "religious creativity is largely replaced by obscurantism, and true ecstatic mysticism by speculative theosophy," a period toward the end of which "markedly diversified" cultures emerge with differing languages and traits "especially in art and architecture": See Goitein, "A Plea for the Periodization," p. 227, and note 1 above.

25 Blair and Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art," pp. 172, 174. This view is also articulated by Oleg Grabar in the *Grove Dictionary of Art*. See his "Islamic Art, I. Introduction," p. 101, where it is argued that the Islamic world changed in the thirteenth century after which it is hardly possible to hold on to the "notion of universal artistic values across time and space," a position that "is reasonable for whoever deals with the early centuries of Islam roughly until the mid-13th century." The chronological divisions in the *Grove Dictionary of Art* are: The Caliphate 632–*c.* 900; Early Middle Period *c.* 900–*c.* 1200; Later Middle Period (*c.* 1200–*c.* 1500); Early Modern Period (*c.* 1500–1916).

26 Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism?; Necipoğlu, "The Concept of Islamic Art"; Volait, "L'art islamique et la problème de périodisation," pp. 783–786. On the comparable predicament of Byzantine art, see Nelson, "The map of art history." Notably, Byzantine architecture is also Orientalized by being coupled with its Saracenic counterpart rather than participating in the rise of the West from late antiquity to the present.

27 Julian Raby, *Venice, Dürer and the Oriental Mode* (Totowa, NJ, distributed by Sotheby Publications, 1982); Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion, 2000); Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100–1500* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); Gerald MacLean, ed., *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Alexander Nagel, *Some Discoveries of 1492: Eastern Antiquities and Renaissance Europe,* The Seventeenth Gerson Lecture (Groningen: The Gerson Lectures Foundation, 2013).

28 The evidence for Deccani merchants in Bursa is mentioned by Halil Inalcik, “Bursa and the Commerce of the Levant,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 3 (1960): 141. For the use of European and Ottoman paper in Qurʾans from the Horn of Africa, see Alessandro Gori, Anne Regourd, Jeremy R. Brown, and Steve Delamarter, *A Handlist of the Manuscripts in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Volume Two: The Arabic Materials of the Ethiopian Islamic Tradition* (Ethiopic Manuscripts, Texts, and Studies) (London: Pickwick, 2014), passim.

29 On Becker and the Pergamon Museum, see Necipoğlu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” pp. 17–23. His theory of civilizations is discussed in Alexander Haridi, *Das Paradigma der “islamischen Zivilisation” – oder die Begründung der deutschen Islamwissenschaft durch Carl Heinrich Becker (1876–1933): eine wissenschaftsgeschtliche Untersuchung* (Würzburg, Ergon, 2005).

30 The classic study is Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973, Rev. and enl. ed. 1987). See also Garth Fowden, *Quṣayr ʿAmra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

31 For a critique, see Finbarr B. Flood, “Faith, Religion and the Material Culture of Early Islam,” in *Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition*, ed. Helen Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012), pp. 253–254. See also Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Dome of the Rock as Palimpsest: ʿAbd al-Malik’s Grand Narrative and Sultan Süleyman’s Glosses,” *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 17–105.

32 Richard Ettinghausen, “Islamic Art and Archaeology,” in *Near Eastern Culture and Society*, ed. T. Cuyler Young (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 17–47; J.M. Rogers, *The Uses of Anachronism: on Cultural and Methodological Diversity in Islamic Art* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1994).

33 Bourguignon d’Anville, “Memoire où il est question de la Peinture des Turcs et des Persans,” *Le Nouveau Mercure* (April 1721): 25–41.

34 Giambattista Toderini, “Dissertation critique sur cette question. Si les figures d’hommes et d’animaux sont défendues par l’alcoran,” in idem, *De la littérature des Turcs*, 4 vols., tr. Abbé de Cournand (Paris: Poinçot, 1789), vol. 3, p. 48. See also Ignatius Mouradgea d’Ohsson, *Tableau général de l’empire othman*, 7 vols. (Paris: de l’imprimerie de Monsieur, 1788–1824), vol. 4, pt. 2, pp. 444–445.

35 Ettinghausen, “Islamic Art and Archaeology,” pp. 17–47; Oleg Grabar, “Islamic Art and Archaeology,” in *The Study of the Middle East: Research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences*, ed. Leonard Binder (New York: Wiley, 1976), pp. 229–263; idem, “Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art,” *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 1–14.

36 Alois Riegl, *Altorientalische Teppiche* (Mittenwald: Mäander Kunstverlag, 1979 [1892]); idem, *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (Berlin: G. Siemens, 1893); trans. Evelyn Kain as *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

37 Annette Hagedorn, “The Development of Islamic Art History in Germany in the Late Nineteenth And Early Twentieth Centuries,” in *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850–1950*, ed. Stephen Vernoit (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), pp. 117–127; Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

38 Mehmet Aga-Oglu, "Remarks on the Character of Islamic Art," *Art Bulletin* 36 (1954): 175–202. See also Zeynep Simavi, "Mehmet Ağa-Oğlu and the Formation of the Field of Islamic art in the United States," reproduced electronically in the *Journal of Art Historiography*, June 1, 2012, vol. 6 (arthistoriography.wordpress.com/(accessed 4 February 2017)).

39 Stephen Vernoit, "Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850–c. 1950," in *Discovering Islamic Art*, pp. 1–61; Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu eds, *Muqarnas*, 24 (2007), special issue titled, "Historiography and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the 'Lands of Rum'"; *Journal of Art Historiography*, June 1, 2012, vol. 6, special issue on the historiography of Islamic art and architecture, eds Carey and Graves (arthistoriography.wordpress.com/(accessed 4 February 2017)); Junod, Khalil, Weber, and Wolf eds, *Islamic Art and the Museum*. On the milieu of dilettantes, amateurs, and "Islamophiles," see Rémi Labrusse ed., *Purs décors? arts de l'Islam, regards du XIXe siècle: collection des Arts Décoratifs*, exh. cat. (Paris: Les Arts Décoratifs, Musée du Louvre, 2007); idem, *Islamophilies: l'Europe moderne et les arts de l'Islam, exh. cat.* (Paris: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, Somogy Éditions d'art, 2011). Mercedes Volait, *Fous du Caire: Excentriques, architectes et amateurs d'art en Égypte, 1867–1914* (Guarnizo: Archange Minaure, 2009); Benedict Cuddon, "A Field Pioneered by Amateurs: The Collecting and Display of Islamic Art in Early-Twentieth Century Boston," *Muqarnas* 30 (2013): 13–33.

40 Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Art and Architecture and the Antique," in *Islamic Visual Culture* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), vol. 3, pp. 423–424; Anna Contadini, "Ugo Monneret de Villard: A Master of the Italian Orientalist School," in *Discovering Islamic Art*, pp. 156–162.

41 Ernst E. Herzfeld, "Arabesque," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1913), pp. 363–367; Ernst Kühnel, *The Arabesque: Meaning and Transformation of an Ornament*, trans. Richard Ettinghausen (Graz: Verlag für Sammler, 1977); originally published as *Die Arabeske: Sinn und Wandlung eines Ornaments* (Wiesbaden: Dietrich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1949).

42 Robert Irwin, "Louis Massignon and the Esoteric Interpretation of Islamic Art," in *Discovering Islamic Art*, pp. 163–170; Richard Ettinghausen, "The Character of Islamic Art," in *The Arab Heritage*, ed. N.A. Faris (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 251–267. For a critique of Ettinghausen's article, see Mehmet Aga-Oglu, "Remarks on the Character of Islamic Art."

43 Finbarr B. Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum," *Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 641–659; Daan Van Reenan, "The Bilderverbot, a New Survey," *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 27–77.

44 Hugh Kennedy, "From Polis to Madina: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria," *Past & Present* 106 (1985): 3–27; Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City: Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (1987): 155–176. On the theme of Paradise, see Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *Images of Paradise in Islamic Art* (Hanover, NH: Hood Museum of Art, 1991); Daud Ali and Emma J. Flatt, "Introduction," in *Garden and Landscape Practices in Precolonial India: Histories from the Deccan*, ed. Daud Ali and Emma J. Flatt (New Delhi: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1–12.

45 Labrusse, *Purs décors*; idem, *Islamophilies.*

46 Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu, “Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist and Nationalist Legacies,” pp. 1–6. See also Finbarr B. Flood, “Introduction,” in *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque, Debates in Indian History and Society*, ed. Finbarr B. Flood (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. xi–lv.

47 See Gülru Necipoğlu, “Creation of a National Genius: Sinan and the Historiography of ‘Classical’ Ottoman Architecture,” in Bozdoğan, S. and Necipoğlu, G. (eds), *Historiography and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the “Lands of Rum,” Muqarnas* 24 (2007b): 141–183. See also Kishwar Rizvi, “Art History and the Nation: Arthur Upham Pope and the Discourse on ‘Persian Art’ in the Early Twentieth Century,” ibid., 45–65; Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, “An Uneasy Historiography: The Legacy of Ottoman Architecture in the Former Arab Provinces,” ibid., 27–43.

48 On the paradoxical treatment of religion see Wendy M.K. Shaw, “The Islam in Islamic Art History: Secularism and Public Discourse,” *Journal of Art Historiography* June 1 (2012), vol. 6 (arthistoriography.wordpress.com/(accessed 4 February 2017)).

49 Leo A. Mayer, *Islamic Architects and Their Works* (Geneva: Albert Kundig, 1956a); idem, *Islamic Astrolabists and Their Works* (Geneva: Albert Kundig, 1956b); Sheila S. Blair, “A Brief Biography of Abu Zayd,” *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 155–176.

50 See, for example, Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, “Review of Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material culture and medieval ‘Hindu–Muslim’ Encounter*,” *Art Bulletin* 93/1 (2011): 108–110.

51 See, for example, Fred M. Donner, “From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-identity in the Early Islamic Community,” *Al-Abhath* 50–51 (2002–2003): 9–53; idem, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).

52 For the rejection of “sectarian” interpretations, see Bernard O’Kane, “A Tale of Two Minbars: Woodwork in Syria and Egypt on the Eve of the Ayyubids,” in *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran: Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia: Studies in Honour of Charles Melville*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand, A.C.S. Peacock, Firuza Abdullaeva (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), pp. 316–328; Jonathan M. Bloom, “Woodwork in Syria, Palestine and Egypt during the 12th and 13th Centuries,” in *Ayyubid Jerusalem: The Holy City in Context 1187–1250*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand and Sylvia Auld (London: Altajir Trust, 2009), pp. 129–146. The impact of Sunni–Shiʿi and intra-Sunni disputes on art and architecture are discussed in Yasser Tabbaa, “Originality and Innovation in Syrian Woodwork of the Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Centuries,” in *Material Evidence and Narrative Sources: Interdisciplinary Studies of the History of the Muslim Middle East*, ed. Daniella Talmon-Heller and Katia Cytryn-Silverman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 188–215; Stephennie Mulder, “The Mausoleum of Imam Shafiʿi,” *Muqarnas* 23 (2006): 15–46; Stephennie Mulder, *The Shrines of the ʿAlids in Medieval Syria: Sunnis, Shiʿis and the Architecture of Coexistence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Finbarr B. Flood, “Islamic Identities and Islamic Art: Inscribing the Qurʾan in twelfth-century Afghanistan,” in *Dialogues in Art History, from Mesopotamian to Modern: Readings for a New Century (Studies in the History of Art Series)*, ed. Elizabeth Cropper (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2009), pp. 91–118. For explorations of the relationship between Shiʿism and art see Irene A. Bierman, *Writing Signs: The Fatimid Public Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

1998); James W. Allan, *The Art and Architecture of Twelver* Shiʿism*: Iraq, Iran and the Indian Sub-Continent* (London: Azimuth Editions, 2012); Pedram Khosronejad, ed., *The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shiʿism: Iconography and Religious Devotion in Shiʿi Islam* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2012); Fahmida Suleiman, ed., *People of the Prophet's House: Artistic and Ritual Expressions of Shiʿi Islam* (London: Azimuth Editions, 2015).

53 Thomas Leisten, “Between Orthodoxy and Exegesis: Some Aspects of attitudes in the Shariʿa toward Funerary Architecture,” *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 12–22; Leor Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*: *Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Societies* (Columbia University Press: New York, 2007); idem, “Christian Impurity versus Economic Necessity: A Fifteenth-Century Fatwa on European Paper,” *Speculum* 83 (2008): 917–945; Ruba Kana’an, “The de Jure ‘Artist’ of the Bobrinski Bucket: Production and Patronage of Metalwork in pre-Mongol Khorasan and Transoxiana,” *Islamic Law and Society* 16 (2009): 175–201; Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2005, second edn. 2011), pp. 47–70.

54 Ettinghausen,”Islamic Art and Archaeology,”; Grabar, “Islamic Art and Archaeology.”

55 Blair and Bloom, “The Mirage of Islamic Art,” p. 171.

56 The implications of some of these kinds of sources for histories of art, images, and material culture more generally are outlined in José Miguel Puerta Vílchez, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe: Al-Andalus y la estética árabe clásica* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1997); Ahmad Ghabin, *Hisba, Arts and Craft in Islam* (Arabisch-Islamische Welt in Tradition und Moderne) (Wiesbaden; Harrasowitz, 2009); Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll – Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995); idem, “The Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures: Sight, Insight and Desire,” *Muqarnas* 32 (2015): 23–61.

57 See, for example, The Library of Arabic Literature recently launched by New York University, Abu Dhabi (http://nyuad.nyu.edu/en/research/nyuad-institute/institute-research/library-arabic-literature.html (accessed 4 February 2017)) and, more recently, the Murty Classical Library of India (www.murtylibrary.com/(accessed 4 February 2017)).

58 Grabar, “Islamic Art and Archaeology.”

59 See, for example, Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*, trans. J. Peter Hobson, foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (London: World of Islam Festival Pub. Co., 1976); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1987); Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* (London: Kazi Publications, 2000).

60 On the question of meaning in Islamic architectural and ornamental forms see Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll*; idem, “L'idée de décor dans les régimes de visualité islamiques,” in *Purs Décors*, pp. 10–23; Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art During the Sunni Revival* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); idem, “Originality and Innovation in Syrian Woodwork.” For a contrary view see Sheila S. Blair, and Jonathan M. Bloom, “Ornament in Islamic Art,” in *Cosmophilia: Islamic Art from the David Collection, Copenhagen*, eds Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom (Chestnut Hill, MA: McMullen Museum of Art, Chicago: Distributed by University of Chicago Press, 2006).

61 Oleg Grabar, "Signs and Symbols in Islamic Architecture," in *Architecture as Symbol and Self-Identity*, ed. Jonathan G. Katz (Philadelphia: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1980), pp. 25–32.

62 Among them the *Matériaux pour un Corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum* (1894–1925) and the *Repertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (1937–).

63 But see Bierman, *Writing Signs*; Gary Leiser and Scott Redford, *Victory Inscribed: The Seljuk Fetihname on the Citadel Walls of Antalya* (Istanbul: AKMED, 2008).

64 Erica Cruikshank Dodd, "The Image of the Word," *Berytus* 18 (1969): 35–79.

65 Richard Ettinghausen, "Arabic Epigraphy: Communication or Symbolic Affirmation," in *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honour of George C. Miles*, ed. Dikran K. Kouymijian (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1974), pp. 297–311; Erica Cruikshank Dodd and Shereen Khairallah, *The Image of the Word*, 2 vols. (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981); Robert Hillenbrand, "Qurʾanic Epigraphy in Islamic Architecture," *Revue des études islamiques* 59 (1991): 171–187.

66 The pioneering excavations were not the preserve of European scholars alone: see Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik, and Edhem Eldem eds, *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914* (Istanbul: SALT, 2011); Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Ayşın Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Raqqa: The Forgotten Excavation of an Ottoman Site in Syria by the Ottoman Imperial Museum in the Early Twentieth Century," *Muqarnas* 30 (2013): 73–93.

67 Ettinghausen, "Islamic Art and Archaeology"; Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Art and Archaeology"; idem, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art."

68 Not only have the frontiers of Islamic archaeology started to expand into later periods (such as Ottoman archaeology), but also a new monograph series launched by Brill is firmly grounded in archaeology with its title, *Arts and Archaeology of the Islamic World*, eds Marcus Milwright, Mariam Rosser-Owen, and Lorenz Korn (Leiden, Brill). See also Uzi Baram and Lynda Carroll eds, *A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire: Breaking New Ground* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2000).

69 Gaston Migeon and Henri Saladin, *Manuel d'art musulman*, 2 vols. (Paris: Picard, 1907).

70 Georges Marçais, *Manuel d'art musulman: L'architecture*, 2 vols. (Paris: Picard, 1926–1927); Gaston Migeon, *Manuel d'art musulman: Arts plastiques et industriels* (Paris: Picard, 1927).

71 Labrusse, *Purs Décors*; idem, *Islamophilies.*

72 From the French of Victor Chauvin, "La défense des images chez les Musulmans," *Annales de l'Académie archéologique de Belgique* 49 (1896), 408. See also Labrusse, *Islamophilies*, p. 180.

73 Margaret Olin, *The Nation Without Art: Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 21.

74 See, among others, Florian Pharaon, "La peinture et sculpture chez les musulmans," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (1869): 442–446.

75 For example, ʿAli Enani, *Beurteilung der Bilderfrage im Islam nacht der Ansicht eines Muslim*, dissertation published by the Philosophischen Fakultät der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin, 1918; Ahmad Taymur Basha, *Al-Taṣwīr ʿinda al-ʿArab* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Taʾlif wa-al-Tarjama wa-al-Nashr, 1942); Bishr Farès, *Essai sur l'esprit de la decoration islamique* (Cairo: Institut français du Caire, 1952).

76 Jytte Klausen, *The Cartoons That Shook the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Finbarr B. Flood, "Inciting Modernity? Images, Alterities and the Contexts of "Cartoon Wars," in *Images That Move*, eds Patricia Spyer and Mary Margaret Steedly (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research, 2013a), pp. 41–72.

77 Richard Ettinghausen, "The Taming of the Horror Vacui in Islamic Art," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 123/1 (1979): 15–28.

78 In this case, it is clear that Ettinghausen's ideas reflect the impact of the very influential art theorist Wilhelm Worringer (d. 1965). In his influential 1907 work *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, Worringer argued that for empathy to flourish, man must rise above his innate fear of the natural world, a fear manifest in a tendency towards abstraction in art and transcendentalism in the sphere of religion. According to Worringer, the civilizational stasis, manifest in the drive to abstraction in Islam, is reflective of a superstitious inability to move beyond the stifling fears of the primitive that reflects "an immense spiritual dread of space": Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, tr. Michael Bullock (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 104, citing Otto Pfleiderer on religion.

79 See the essays in Andrea Lerner and Avinoam Shalem, eds, *After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition "Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst" Reconsidered* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

80 For example, Madeline H. Caviness, "Broadening the Definitions of 'Art': The Reception of Medieval Works in the Context of Post-Impressionist Movements," in Patrick J. Gallacher and Helen Damico, eds, *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 259–282; J.B. Bullen, "Byzantinism and Modernism 1900–1914," *Burlington Magazine* 141 (November 1999): 665–675; David Lewis, "Matisse and Byzantium, or, Mechanization Takes Command," *Modernism/Modernity* 16/1 (2009): 51–59; Madeline H. Caviness, "The Politics of Taste. An Historiography of 'Romanesque' Art in the Twentieth Century," in *Romanesque Art and Thought in the Twelfth Century: Essays in Honor of Walter Cahn*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 57–81.

81 Typical in this regard was the 2001 exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler in Basel: Markus Brüderlin, ed., *Ornament and Abstraction: The Dialogue Between non-Western, Modern and Contemporary Art*, exh. cat. (Riehen/Basel: Fondation Beyeler, 2001); see also idem, "L'art abstrait du XXe siècle, autour de l'arabesque," *Perspective, La revue de l'INHA* 1 (2010–2011): 171–176.

82 Finbarr B. Flood, "Lost Histories of a Licit Figural Art," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45/3 (2013b): 566–569. For a recent affirmation of incommensurability between the Islamic world and Europe emblematized by attitudes to images, see Hans Belting, *Florence and Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), critiqued in Necipoğlu, "The Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures."

83 A rare exception was the *Taswir: Islamische Bildwelten und Moderne* exhibition held in the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin in 2009–2010: Almut S. Bruckstein and Hendrik Budde, eds, *Taswir: Islamische Bildwelten und Moderne* (Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2009).

84 Vernoit, *Discovering Islamic Art*; Lermer and Shalem, *After One Hundred Years*; Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu eds, "Historiography and Ideology: Architectural Heritage in the Lands of Rum" (Special issue of *Muqarnas*, vol. 24, 2007); Yuka Kadoi and Iván Szántó eds, *The Shaping of Persian Art: Collections and Interpretations of the Art of Islamic Iran and Central Asia* (Cambridge: Scholars Publishing, 2013); Iván Szántó, *Safavid Art and Hungary: The Esterházy Appliqué in Context* (Piliscsaba, Hungary: Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 2010).

85 The key work is Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010).

86 Avinoam Shalem, "The Otherness in the Focus of Interest: Or, If Only The Other Could Speak," in Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli and Gerhard Wolf, eds, *Islamic Artefacts in the Mediterranean World: Trade, Gift Exchange and Artistic Transfer* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010a), pp. 29–44; idem, "If Objects Could Speak," in Jürgen Wassim Frembgen, ed., *The Aura of the Alif* (Munich: Prestel, 2010b), pp. 127–147; Avinoam Shalem and Eva-Maria Troelenberg. "Beyond Grammar and Taxonomy: Some Thoughts on Cognitive Experiences and Responsive Islamic Ornaments," *Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie* 3 (2012): 385–410; Finbarr B. Flood, "Bodies and Becoming: Mimesis, Mediation and the Ingestion of the Sacred in Christianity and Islam," in *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice*, ed. Sally M. Promey (New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 459–493; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral: The Agency of Ornament in Ottoman and Safavid Visual Cultures," in *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, eds Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 132–155.

87 Massumeh Farhad, ed., *The Tsars and the East: Gifts from Turkey and Iran in the Moscow Kremlin*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2009). Sinem Arcak, Gifts in motion: Ottoman–Safavid cultural exchange, 1501–1618, Ph.D. dissertation (University of Minnesota, 2012); Linda Komaroff, *The Gift Tradition in Islamic Art,* exh. cat. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

88 This interest reflects a broader disciplinary shift. See, for example, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, *Global Artistic Circulations and the Global History of Art* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

89 ʿAli Ibrahim al-Ghabban, *Roads of Arabia: Archaeology and History of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2010).

90 Alain George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy* (London: Saqi Books, 2010); François Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

91 See note 52 above.

92 Mulder, "The Mausoleum of Imam Shafiʿi"; idem, *The Shrines of the ʿAlids in Medieval Syria: Sunnis, Shiʿis and the Architecture of Coexistence.*

93 See note 52 above.

94 Jerrilynn D. Dodds, María Rosa Menocal, and Abigail Krasner Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008). See also a journal published by Brill, titled *Medieval Encounters: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Culture in Confluence and Dialogue.*

95 Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (New York: Verso, 2013).

96 Alka Arvind Patel, *Building Communities in Gujarat: Architecture and Society During the Twelfth Through Fourteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009a); Elizabeth Lambourn, "The Formation of the Batu Aceh Tradition in Fifteenth-century Samudera-Pasai," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 32/93 (2004a), 211–248; idem, "Carving and Communities: Marble Carving for Muslim Patrons of Khambhāt and Around the Indian Ocean Rim, Late Thirteenth-Mid–Fifteenth Centuries," *Ars Orientalis* 34 (2004b): 99–133; Mark C. Horton, *Shanga: An Early Muslim Trading Community on the East Coast of Africa* (London: British Institute in East Africa, 1996); idem, "Port Cities and their Merchants on the East African Coast," in A. Green and R. Leech, eds, *Cities in the World 1500–2000* (London: Maney, 2006), pp. 15–29.

97 Stefano Carboni and Linda Komaroff, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353,* exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002); Yuka Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie: The Art of Mongol Iran* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Deniz Beyazıt, *At the Crossroads of Empires: 14th–15th-Century Eastern Anatolia* (Paris: De Boccard, 2012); Patricia Blessing, *Rebuilding Anatolia After the Mongol Conquest: Islamic Architecture in the Lands of Rūm, 1240–1330* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014).

98 See a special issue of *Muqarnas* 29 (2012) with essays focusing on the shared histories of Islamic and Italian art.

99 Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople," *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 1–81; Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinoplis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

100 Anna Contadini and Claire Norton, eds, *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013); Gülru Necipoğlu, "Architectural Dialogues across the Eastern Mediterranean: Domed Sanctuaries in the Ottoman Empire and Renaissance Italy," chapter 20 in Alina Payne, ed., *The Companion to the History of Architecture: Renaissance and Baroque* (New York: Wiley, 2017). See also essays on Islamic topics in Alina Payne, ed., *Dalmatia and the Mediterranean: Portable Archaeology and the Poetics of Influence* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); and Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne, eds, *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), with an introductory essay by the editors.

101 Scott Redford, "Byzantium and the Islamic World," in Helen C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 243–255, 397.

102 Serge Gruzinski, *Quelle heure est-il la-bàs? Amérique et islam à l'orée des temps modernes* (Paris: L'Univers historique, 2008); Tijana Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/1 (2009): 35–63; Evelin Wetter and Ágnes Ziegler, "Osmanische Textilien in der Repräsentationskultur des Siebenbürgisch-Sächsischen Patriziats," in *Türkenkriege*

und Adelskultur in Ostmitteleuropa vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert, ed. Robert Born and Sabine Jagodzinski (Studia Jagellonica Lipsiensia 14) (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2014), pp. 269–285; Finbarr B. Flood, Islam and Image: Polemics, Theology and Modernity (London: Reaktion, forthcoming).

103 Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral."

104 In addition to the various works cited above, see, for example, Ahmet A. Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire* (Farnham, England: Ashgate 2015); Stephen Vernoit, *Occidentalism: Islamic Art in the 19th Century* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1997); Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit, eds, *Islamic Art in the 19th Century – Tradition, Innovation, Eclecticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Shirine Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

105 Among these, see the essays in Finbarr B. Flood and Nebahat Avcıoğlu, *Globalizing Cultures: Art and Mobility in the Eighteenth Century*, dedicated issue of *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2011); Nebahat Avcıoğlu, *Turquerie and the Politics of Representation, 1728–1876* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

106 Nasser Rabbat, "The Formation of the Neo-Mamluk Style in Modern Egypt," in *The Education of the Architect: Historiography, Urbanism, and the Growth of Architectural Knowledge*, ed. Martha Pollak (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 363–386.

107 Flood, "Between Cult and Culture"; Jamal J. Elias, "(Un)making Idolatry: From Mecca to Bamiyan," *Future Anterior* 4/2 (2007): 2–29; Finbarr Barry Flood, "Idol Breaking as Image Making in the 'Islamic State'" *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 7 (2016): 116–138.

108 For the general background see Sonja Mejcher-Atassi and John Pedro Schwarz, eds, *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2012).

109 Coco Ferguson, "Islamic Art at a Crossroads," *Bidoun: Arts and Culture from the Middle East* 1/2 (2004): 52–55; David J. Roxburgh, "After Munich: Reflections on Recent Exhibitions," in *After One Hundred Years*, pp. 359–386.

110 Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism," pp. 38–39.

111 Ettinghausen, "Islamic Art and Archaeology," p. 147.

112 Shalem, "Dangerous Claims: On the 'Othering' of Islamic Art History and How it Operates within Global Art History."

113 Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization. Postmodernism and Identity* (London: Sage, 1995), p. 14.

114 Ettinghausen, "Islamic Art and Archaeology"; Grabar, "Islamic Art and Archaeology."

115 Grabar, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art."

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Part I

The Early Caliphates, Umayyads, and the End of Late Antiquity (650–750)

The past decades have seen a radical shift in the conception of the relationship between early Islamic art and architecture and that of late antiquity, the world that emerged from the fragmentation of the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries. Whereas the rise of Islam was once assumed to mark the end of classical antiquity, the current consensus is that many of its institutions and much of its material culture represent significant points of continuity. This move from one extreme to the other is not without its problems, most obviously the failure to account for the originality of early Islamic art and architecture and its likely debt to pre-Islamic Arabian precedents. It does, however, indicate the need to consider the earliest art and architecture of Islam in relation to its antecedents.

This section begins with a survey of the art and architecture of pre-Islamic Arabia, an area of intensive and transformative scholarship over the past decades, by Barbara Finster. It was here, in the western area of the Arabian Peninsula known as the Hijaz that the Prophet Muhammad was born around the year 570 CE. According to tradition, when he was in his 40s, the Prophet received the first of a series of divine revelations from the angel Gabriel, revelations that would eventually comprise the text of the Qurʾan. Tensions with the population of Mecca caused the Prophet and his followers to migrate to Medina to the north in 622. It is the date of this migration (*hijra*), not that of the Prophet's birth, that marks the year zero of the Muslim calendar.

By the time that the Prophet died in 632, much of the Arabian Peninsula was under the control of the Muslims. The following decades were marked by instability related to the question of succession and doctrinal disputes within the early community. Of the Prophet's four immediate successors three were assassinated.

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The assassination of the second of these, the caliph ʿUthman (d. 656), provoked the first of two debilitating civil wars. The first civil war marked the reign of the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law ʿAli (r. 656–661), who was opposed by a faction led by Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan (r. 661–680), the governor of Damascus. The victorious emergence of Muʿawiya', a member of the Umayyad clan, laid the ground for a permanent split between Sunnis and Shiʿis (Shīʿatu ʿAlī, the Party of ʿAli). It also marked a shift in the balance of power from Arabia and the Hijaz to Syria, where the line of the Umayyads (661–750), the first Islamic dynasty, had its power-base. The resulting disjunction between centers of political and religious authority, which remained in Arabia, was never to be overcome and played a role in the second civil war (681–692).

The world into which Islam was born had been dominated by two superpowers: Byzantium, which controlled much of the Mediterranean; and the Sasanian Empire, which controlled most of the regions from Iraq to the western borders of China. Each had its Arab clients such as the Christian Ghassanids of Syria and the Lakhmids of Iraq, both of whom perpetuated local artistic traditions that are still poorly understood, combining them with elements drawn from the late antique artistic heritage of their overlords. The territories of these vassal polities effectively formed a buffer zone, a reminder that regional complexities are often obscured by the presentation of both empires as homogeneous and monolithic. The transregional implications of the push and pull between these empires extended to Arabia and even the Christian kingdom of Axum in Ethiopia, where some of the early Muslims took refuge from their Meccan adversaries before the Muslims emerged victorious in 630.

The conquests through which the adherents of the new faith established their rule over vast swathes of the known world were won during the following decades, despite the persistence of turbulent intra-Muslim disputes. By 651 the Sasanian Empire had ceased to exist, its former lands incorporated into the burgeoning territories of the emerging Islamic state. In the preceding decades, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the North African territories of Byzantium had been taken. Less than a century after the Prophet's death, Muslim armies had reached the Atlantic and advanced into southern France, while in the east they raided the mountain valleys of Afghanistan, seized large parts of Central Asia, conquered much of the southern regions of the Indus Valley (present-day Pakistan), and advanced towards the western territories of imperial China.

The conquests of the early Muslims mark one of the most remarkable achievements in human history. However, from the point of view of material culture, there is surprisingly little apart from a few coins, inscriptions, and papyri to document their impact, or indeed the early history of the Muslim community itself. There are indications that the Meccan elite may have attempted to canonize the text of the Qur'an and the architecture of the mosque perhaps as early as the 630s or 640s, but it is not until the 690s that we have evidence for consistent campaigns of architectural patronage. These developments are related to the emergence of well-defined state structures, witnessed by major reforms, including the replacement of Greek by Arabic for administrative purposes, and the consistent minting of an Islamic coinage. It is, in fact, coinage that provides the most concrete evidence that the Umayyad caliphate was in search of an appropriate visual identity, witnessed in an intense series of iconographic experiments in gold and silver undertaken between 692 and 699, discussed by Luke Treadwell in this section.

It is in the medium of architecture rather than the portable arts that the legacy of the Umayyad caliphate is best preserved. The key figures are the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 685–705) and his son, al-Walid (r. 705–715), whose reigns not only saw major administrative reforms but also the building of spectacular mosques and shrines, the earliest of which is the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (692). The choice of the site reflects the importance of Syria and its Abrahamic associations to the Umayyad caliphate, which, insofar as it was sedentary, was based in Damascus. The patronage of monumental architecture marked by the use of lavish ornamental media such as marble and glass mosaic continued a late antique tradition, but often reconfigured its elements in interesting and innovative ways. The same processes of reconfiguration can be seen in the illuminations of early Qurʾans, some of which are now acknowledged as Umayyad on stylistic grounds, even though no surviving Qurʾan manuscript (*mushaf*) bears a date before the ninth century. These related early developments in the production of Qurʾans and sacred architecture are analyzed in the chapters of Alain George and Mattia Guidetti, respectively.

From around the second decade of the eighth century, the Umayyad elite also constructed lavish residences (Arabic *qusur*, singular *qasr*) in Palestine and Syria, often located outside of major urban centers. These are generally referred to as "desert palaces," but are better imagined as agricultural estates comparable to the *latifundia* of the late Roman Empire. The formal and ornamental aspects of many of these palatine residences exemplify the manipulation of late antique forms and iconographies seen in Umayyad sacred architecture while also indicating a self-reflexive play with Byzantine and Sasanian imagery. Paradoxically, given the former perception of Islam as the terminal point of late antiquity, the profane architecture of the Umayyad caliphate is marked by the revival of classical forms and media that had fallen into abeyance in preceding centuries; these include orthogonal planning, large-scale stone sculpture, and even the adoption of the external form of the Roman fort (*castrum*) as the basic model for the Umayyad *qasr*.

Excessive expenditure on architecture was among the many complaints leveled against the Umayyad caliphs by their opponents, who led a successful revolution against the dynasty in 750. With the overthrow of the Umayyads by the Abbasids, the political center of gravity shifted once again, for the second time in less than a century. This time the shift was to the east, towards Iraq, which had been a consistent center of opposition to the Umayyads, and where the heartlands of the defeated Sasanian Empire had lain.

2

The Material Culture of Pre- and Early Islamic Arabia

Barbara Finster

The settlement of the Arabian Peninsula goes back to the dawn of history. Its geographical location connected the peninsula to India and Asia from the second century BCE with the discovery of the monsoon winds. Africa was close by; to the north lay the Mediterranean world and Mesopotamia. From the earliest times, the Arabian Peninsula played a decisive intermediary role in the transfer of goods. The domestication of the one-humped camel in the eleventh century BCE enabled travelers to cross almost waterless terrain. Incense and myrrh were the most expensive and sought-after products that the ancient world needed for its temples. The requisite bushes and trees grew in Hadramaut, Dhofar, Soqotra, and Somalia. Spices including cinnamon, aloes, and cassia were also trade items (Groom 1998) (Map 2.1).

In antiquity the Arabian Peninsula was part of the cultures of the Near East. This cultural landscape can be divided into three zones. The east coast, with the Arabian Gulf, lay under the influence of Mesopotamian culture, and later Parthian and Sasanian rule. The northwest turned to the Levant and the Mediterranean. Yemen in the southwest developed an independent culture, which also influenced the central regions of the peninsula.

First Millennium BCE

The heyday of the Arabian high cultures was the first millennium BCE. Tayma᾿ in the northwest lay on the main route that led from southern Arabia to Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. The city was already tied into long-distance trade in

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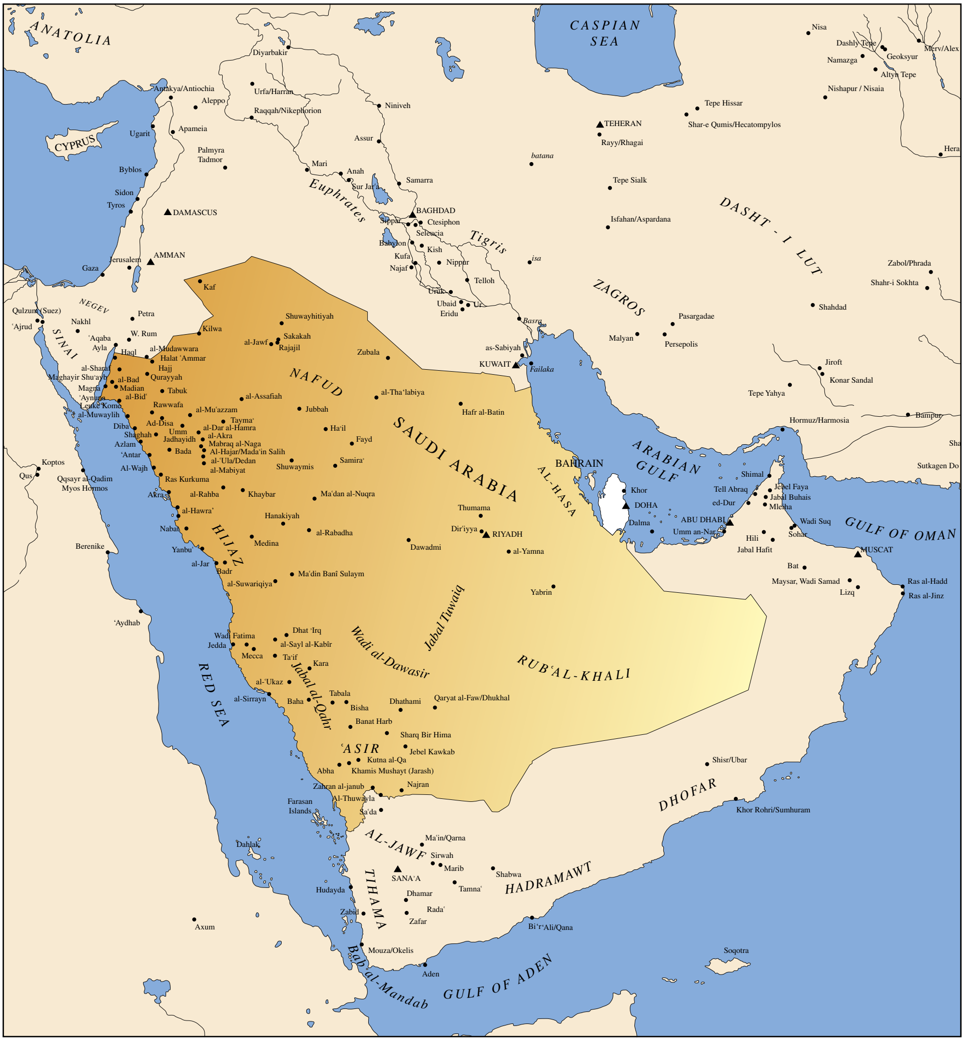
ANATOLIA
CASPIAN SEA
CYPRUS
Diyarbakir
Antakya/Antiochia
Aleppo
Urfa/Harran
Raqqah/Nikephorion
Niniveh
Ugarit
Apameia
Palmyra
Tadmor
Assur
Byblos
Mari
Anah
Samarra
Sidon
Tyros
DAMASCUS
Euphrates
BAGHDAD
Ctesiphon
Seleucia
Sippar
Babylon
Kish
Kufa
Nippur
Najaf
Tigris
Jerusalem
AMMAN
Gaza
Uruk
Telloh
Ubaid
Ur
Eridu
Basra
NEGEV
SINAI
Petra
Nakhl
Qulzum (Suez)
'Ajrud
'Aqaba
Ayla
W. Rum
Kaf
Kilwa
Shuwayhitiyah
Sakakah
al-Jawf
Rajajil
Zubala
NAFUD
al-Mudawwara
Halat 'Ammar
Hajj
Qurayyah
Tabuk
al-Bad
Madian
al-Bid'
al-Sharaf
Maghayir Shu'ayb
Magna
'Aynuna
Leuke Kome
al-Muwaylih
Rawwafa
al-Mu'azzam
al-Assafiah
Jubbah
al-Tha'labiya
Hafr al-Batin
KUWAIT
Failaka
as-Sabiyah
Tayma'
al-Dar al-Hamra
al-Akra
Mabraq al-Naqa
Al-Hajar/Mada'in Salih
al-'Ula/Dedan
al-Mabiyat
Ha'il
Fayd
Samira'
Shuwaymis
Duba
Shaghah
Azlam
'Antar
Ad-Disa
Umm Jadhayidh
Bada
Al-Wajh
Ras Kurkuma
Koptos
Qus
Qusayr al-Qadim
Myos Hormos
Akra
al-Rahba
Khaybar
al-Hawra'
Ma'dan al-Nuqra
Hanakiyah
al-Rabadha
Nabat
Medina
HIJAZ
SAUDI ARABIA
AL-HASA
BAHRAIN
Thumama
Dir'iyya
RIYADH
al-Yamna
Dawadmi
Yanbu'
al-Jar
Badr
Ma'din Banī Sulaym
al-Suwariqiya
Berenike
Yabrin
Jabal Tuwaiq
'Aydhab
Dhat 'Irq
al-Sayl al-Kabīr
Wadi Fatima
Jedda
Mecca
Ta'if
Kara
Wadi al-Dawasir
RUB'AL-KHALI
al-'Ukaz
RED SEA
Jabal al-Qahr
al-Sirrayn
Baha
Tabala
Bisha
Dhathami
Qaryat al-Faw/Dhukhal
Banat Harb
Sharq Bir Hima
'ASIR
Jebel Kawkab
Kutna al-Qa
Abha
Khamis Mushayt (Jarash)
Zahran al-janub
Najran
Farasan Islands
Al-Thuwayla
Sa'da
Dahlak
AL-JAWF
Ma'in/Qarna
Sirwah
Marib
SANA'A
Shabwa
Tamna'
HADRAMAWT
TIHAMA
Hudayda
Dhamar
Rada'
Zabid
Zafar
Axum
Bi'r'Ali/Qana
Mouza/Okelis
Aden
Bab al-Mandab
GULF OF ADEN
Soqotra
DHOFAR
Shisr/Ubar
Khor Rohri/Sumhuram
TEHERAN
Rayy/Rhagai
Tepe Hissar
Shar-e Qumis/Hecatompylos
batana
Tepe Sialk
Isfahan/Aspardana
isa
ZAGROS
DASHT - I LUT
Pasargadae
Persepolis
Malyan
Shahdad
Zabol/Phrada
Shahr-i Sokhta
Jiroft
Konar Sandal
Tepe Yahya
Hormuz/Harmosia
Bampur
Sutkagen Do
ARABIAN GULF
Khor
DOHA
Dalma
ABU DHABI
Umm an-Nar
Tell Abraq
ed-Dur
Shimal
Jebel Faya
Jabal Buhais
Mleiha
Wadi Suq
Sohar
Hili
Jabal Hafit
GULF OF OMAN
MUSCAT
Bat
Maysar, Wadi Samad
Lizq
Ras al-Hadd
Ras al-Jinz
Nisa
Dashly Tepe
Namazga
Geoksyur
Altyn Tepe
Merv/Alex
Nishapur / Nisaia
Hera

Map 2.1 The Arabian Peninsula, catalogue Paris 2010, 28–29. Source: M. Cotty. Reproduced with permission of Musée du Louvre.

the second millennium BCE, and had rich water resources and agriculture. Al-khurayba (Dedan), likewise located on the incense route in the well-watered Wadi al-Qura, was the capital city of the Lihyan from the sixth to the first century BCE. The temple in the center of the settlement had a rectangular ground plan of 16 × 13.2 m and a terrace at the north side. The roof rested on four rectangular stone pillars. The oversized statues of the kings of Lihyan were set up inside and outside the temple as votive offerings (al-Said 2010: 266) (Figure 2.1).

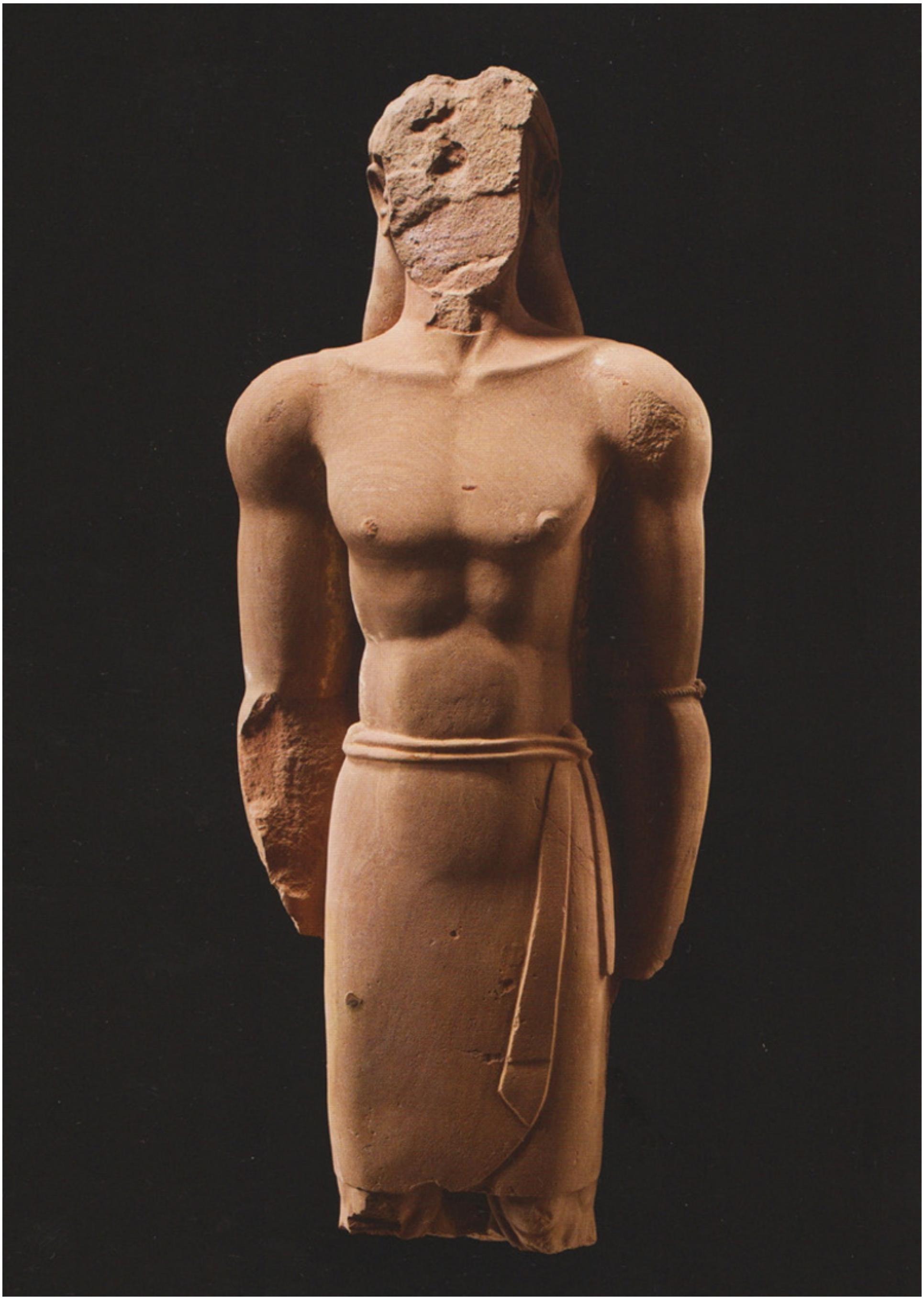

FIGURE 2.1 Al-ʿUla, statue, probably of a king of the dynasty of Lihyan (fourth–third century BCE), catalogue Paris 2010, 278. Source: S. Said. Reproduced with permission.

The city cultures in the northeast also flourished most in the pre-Christian centuries, although Thaj, which some identify with the rich city of Gerrha, had two periods of occupation and continued into the fourth century CE. This large city, with its stone wall, lay astride the east–west trade routes but was provided with precious art objects and artifacts with a Hellenistic character (al-Zahrani 2010). ʿAin Jawan, the largest ruin of this period in Saudi Arabia, has scarcely been investigated (al-Saud 2010; al-Zahrani 2010).

In the southwest of Arabia, in Yemen, high cultures arose in Marib, in the Jauf, and in Hadramaut, which qualify as genuinely creative. The center of the dominant Sabaean kingdom, whose culture radiated as far as Ethiopia, was Marib, site of a famous dam. Already in the early seventh century BCE the great Mukarrib of Sabaʾ, Karibʾil Watar, succeeded in creating a united kingdom extending from Najran in the north to the Gulf of Aden in the south and as far as Hadramaut to the east. Thus emerged, both culturally and politically, the first large kingdom in South Arabia (Robin 1998a: 162). Yet other kingdoms arose in southwestern Arabia, such as Qataban with Timnaʾ as the capital, Hadramaut with its capital Shabwa, Ausan with the city of Miswar, and the kingdom of the Minaeans with the city of Maʿin. In spite of various "dialects" of Old South Arabian, the oasis cities formed a cultural unit, especially since they all used the "Sabaean" script in both hieratic and cursive forms, the latter in wood, from the seventh century BCE. Marib, like Shabwa and Timna, lay on the incense route, which led to Maʿin and Najran in the north. Sophisticated water management fostered intensive agriculture over the millennia. The famous dam of Marib (sixth century BCE, last repairs fifth and sixth centuries CE) was preceded by constructions in the Wadi Dhana, which like the city can be dated to the second millennium BCE. Oases to both north and south, with a surface area of 14 900 hectares, were cultivated with floodwater.

The art of the Sabaeans in its classical period was characterized by its extreme abstraction, as can be seen in the temple buildings preceded by a portico. The distinctive ibex friezes that decorated the temple are of amazing precision and beauty, as are the pillars with their capitals. An earlier temple in the interior of the city, whose portico had eight supports, was "restored" in the eleventh century CE as the mosque of Solomon. Various types of temple, some of which probably influenced later mosque architecture, can be distinguished (Johns 1999: 99–100). In the Sabaean region most of the temples are courtyard complexes, which in the classical period had an inner courtyard surrounded by porticoes. Enclosed hypostyle temples can be found in the Jauf. Temples with a rectangular plan, whose interior space was divided into two rows with three or four supports, are also found in the Jauf (e.g., at Maʿin) and above all in Hadramaut. They have a bent entrance in Hadramaut, with steps at the side (Schmidt 1987, 1999; Sedov 2005: 37, fig. 67).

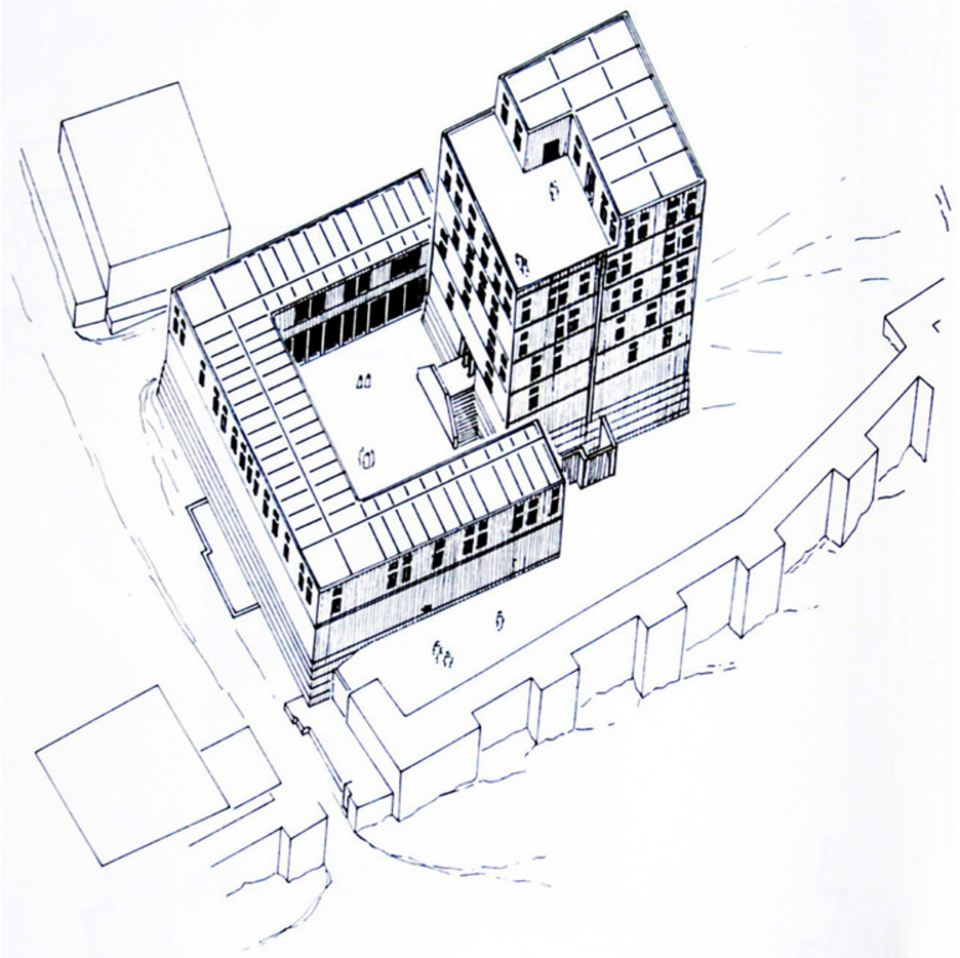

FIGURE 2.2 Shabwa, the Royal Palace (third century CE). Source: J.F. Breton (1999, fig. 24). Reproduced with permission.

In addition to the evidence from temple architecture, it is clear that a new house type was introduced in the Sabaean period, which corresponded to the classical Yemeni tower house. The new architecture is notable for its stone foundation courses with a superstructure of wood and clay (Figure 2.2). Portrait heads of marble and alabaster, which were set into grave stelai, or block-like figures, sitting or standing, show technical skill and an interest in sculptural forms (Antonini 2003: 22) (Figure 2.3). Statues of stone or bronze were produced as votive gifts for the deity.

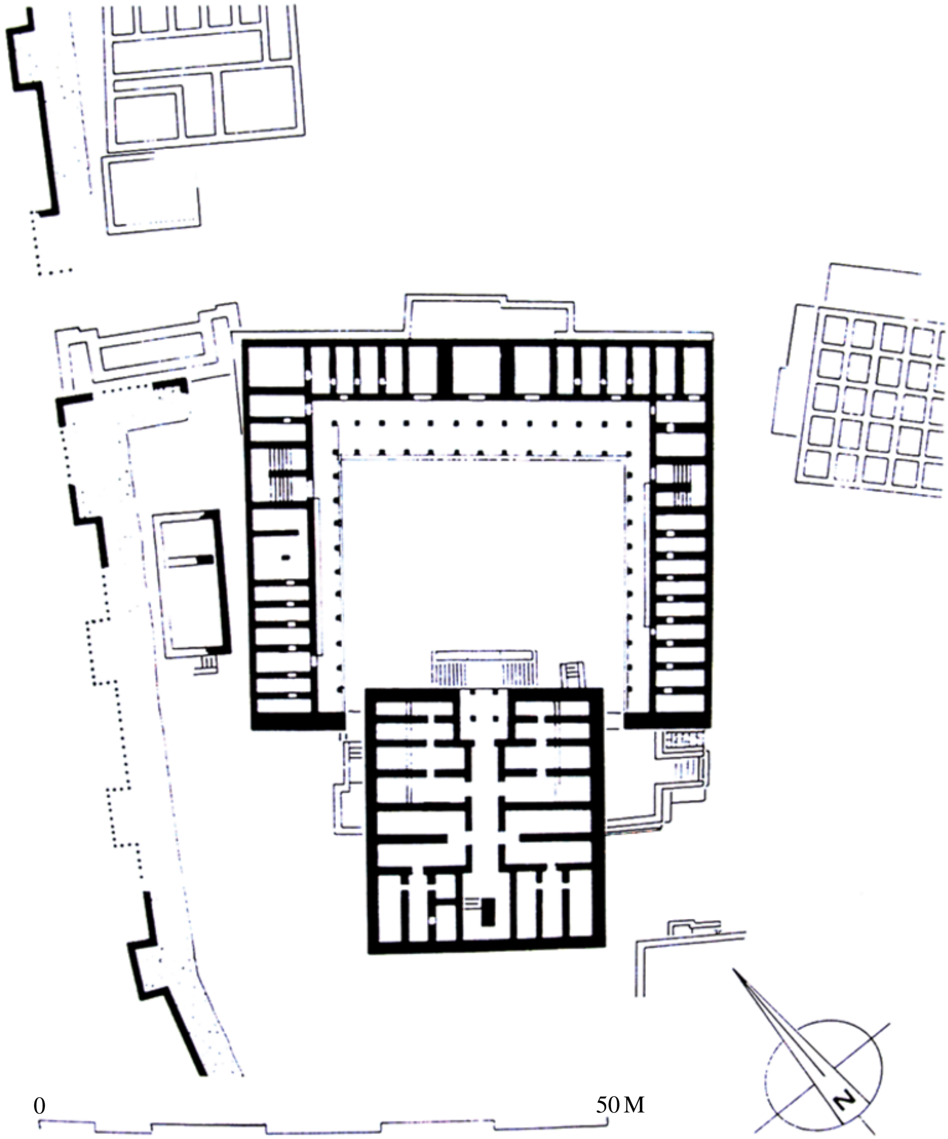

FIGURE 2.2 (*Continued*)

Second to Fourth Centuries CE

The East and the Gulf Region

The city of Maliha in the south (Emirate of Sharjah), which had existed since the third century BCE, had in the first centuries CE large houses with interior courtyard and two palaces. Sophisticated grave goods reveal the prosperity of the inhabitants. Luxury objects from the Levant, Mesopotamia, Iran, and India were imported and

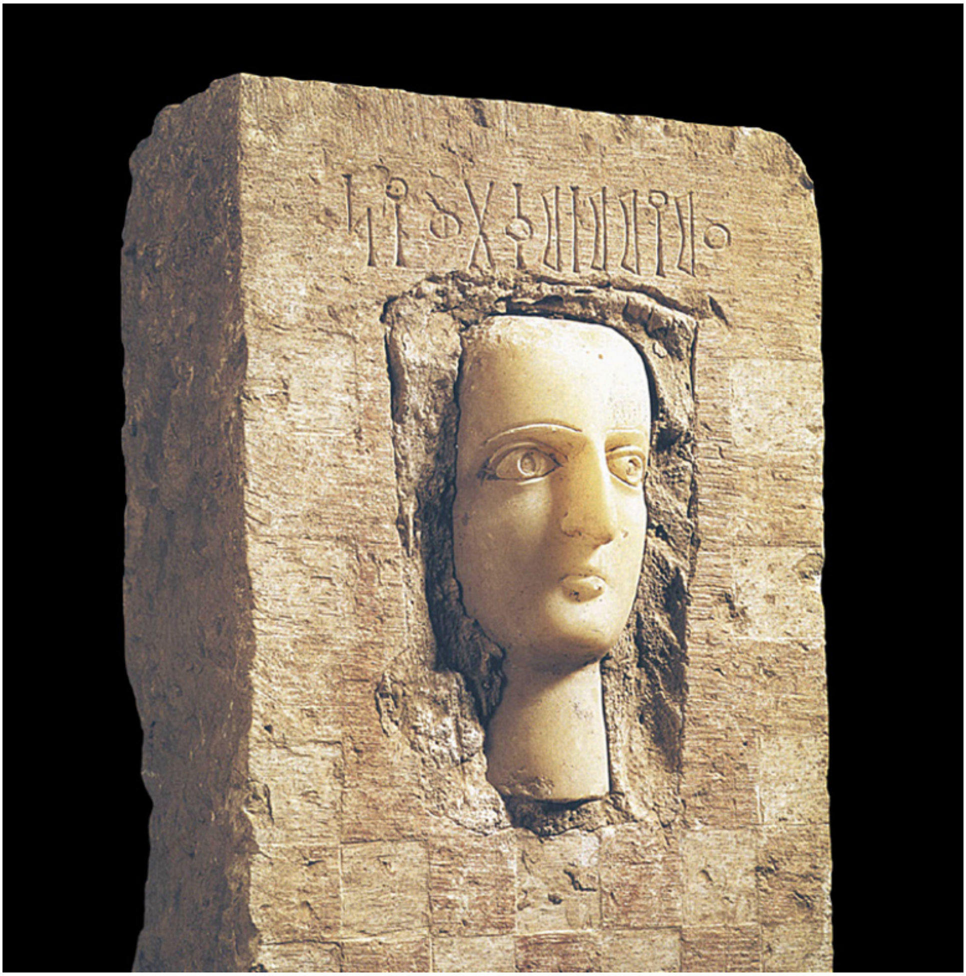

Figure 2.3 Marib, Awam cemetery, tombstone (second–first century BCE). Source: I. Gerlach. Reproduced with permission.

presumably exchanged for pearls (Cuny and Mouton 2009: fig. 2). Shortly before 200 CE a fortress was erected here; it was 60 × 65 m in size, with rectangular centrally placed and corner towers. The walls were made of mud brick. The gate on the east side led through a projecting tower, also rectangular, which underscored the sophistication of the fortress. Around the courtyard were rows of oblong rooms, while the north side had rows with two rooms each. They served as storage and work rooms for the production of metal objects in iron and bronze, and for minting coins. The living quarters were located on the north side on the ground floor where luxury objects were found. A second castle measuring 32 × 30 m and datable to the third century CE with rectangular towers and a sophisticated façade was enclosed by a fortification wall (65 × 70 m) (Mouton *et al.* 2012).

The port of Suhar, which lay in the vicinity, had participated in Indian Ocean trade since the second to third century and facilitated the import of wares from India. A smaller fortress was built between around 200 and 250 CE in El-Dur, a large settlement. Built of coral, with an almost square ground plan of 22 × 25 m, it had rounded corner towers. In the interior was a roughly square construction with two rooms. The architecture is certainly modest, but it is clear that – probably through the influence of Parthian and Sasanian architecture – such fortresses served as residences for the elite (Cuny and Mouton 2009: 110–113). That also includes the fortress of Bahrain dated to the first half of the third century CE (Kennet 2007: 88; Kervran 2013). El-Dur was quite a wealthy place, as sherds and finds of Roman glass, Parthian glazed pottery, terra sigillata pottery, and Indian red polished ware attest. A significant market took place in Dibba (Potts 1990: II, 339). In the third century economic decline in this region set in, which is apparently attributable to the expansionist policies of the Sasanian ruler Ardashir (224–241). Henceforth there were hardly any more settlements (Kennet 2009: 110).

The Northwest

In the second century CE, the Nabataeans had expanded southwards from their capital city, Petra, into the Hijaz and the large oases of Midian, Tayma᾽ and Mada᾽in Salih (Hegra). They had taken over the long-distance trade when the Minaean kingdom had collapsed, and transported the precious cargo from Asia and South Arabia to the Mediterranean. The ports of Leuke Kome and Egra Kome supplemented the land route, which was secured through way-stations. In the year 106 CE the region was annexed to the Roman Empire as part of the Provincia Arabia and thereby was closely tied to the area of Greater Syria and the Mediterranean. Tayma᾽ remained an important settlement, which is still not fully explored. A palatial complex to the north of the ancient temple, deserted from the third century CE, covers some 2 hectares. Qasr ar-Radm probably dates to this period but its function is not yet known (Hausleiter 2010: 238).

The severe classical façades of the funerary monuments cut out of bedrock and crowned with crenellations (Mada᾽in Salih and Magha᾽ir Shuʿayb) exhibit the masterly stone masonry of the Nabataeans (Figure 2.4). Characteristic for Nabataean art are capitals with projecting corners and eggshell thin, painted pottery, which was also exported as a luxury good (Nehmé *et al.* 2010: fig. 8).

Qaryat al-Faw

The city of Qaryat al-Faw in south central Arabia flourished under the Kinda in the first to third century CE, even though the Himyarite kings exercised suzerainty over the region. Different tribes inhabited the city and formed a kind of merchant republic which minted its own coins. Thanks to its position on the trade route, precious goods were transported from Qaryat both to the Levant and Egypt as well as to the Gulf.

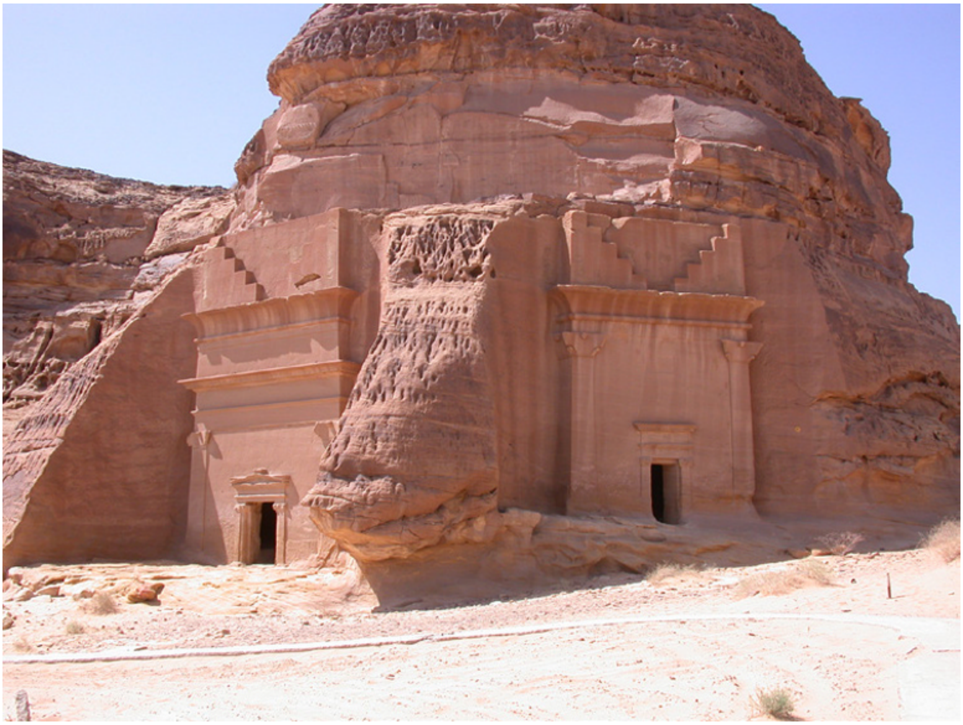

FIGURE 2.4 Madaʾin Salih (Hegra), façade of a tomb (first century CE). Source: R. Eichmann. Reproduced with permission.

From *c*. 300 BCE to the early first century CE, the Minaeans had lived here on an already existing site, so that the culture of the city bore the imprint of Maʿin, Yemen. Inscriptions were written in Old South Arabian, although the spoken language was North Arabian.

Many years of excavations by the Saudi Arabian Department of Antiquities have brought to light rich finds that attest to the diversity of Qaryat's material culture, including bronze figures from Egypt and the Levant, glass from Italy and Syria, Parthian and Nabataean pottery, and significant amounts of textiles. These goods bear witness to the high standard of living enjoyed by the inhabitants. And although they are mostly imports, they show that luxury objects were available. Fragments of bronze statues and of large stone statues were also found (al-Ansary 1982, 2010: 311–317).

The site of Qaryat al-Faw (also known as Qaryat Dhat Kahil) was not fortified, although extensive walls surrounded it. The city clearly had an organized plan with individual quarters, in which the royal palace, temple, and residential areas were found. The provision of water via canals and cisterns was also well thought out. Embedded in an oasis of palms and green fields, Qaryat appeared as a paradise, or at least as a garden and so was named "dhat jannan" (endowed with a garden). To what extent its planning reflected that of Maʿin, which lay to the south, remains uncertain.

Five temples have been discovered, dedicated to different deities and dated to different periods. The Temple of Wadd, a small rectangular construction of well-dressed limestone ashlars, belonged along with the fortified *suq* and the palace to the center of the city.

The *suq*, a structure with a rectangular plan of 30.75 × 25.20 m with corner and interval towers, formed a fortified castle, whose outer walls consisted of stone ashlars covered on the inside and outside with mud bricks. On the long sides of the court were grouped rows of shops, while steps led to the upper story. A deep well provided water, and a channel for drainage. To the palace belong two buildings rectangular in plan (the larger one 12.20 × 5.20 m) with two stone columns each in the interior supporting the roof. Benches running along the walls show that these were reception or assembly rooms. They were furnished with frescoes, of which a fragment of probably a banquet scene with an impressive head crowned by two assistant figures with a kind of diadem is especially noteworthy (al-Ansary 2010: 338). An inscription identifies the Dionysos-like person as one of the nobles of Qaryat. One wall-painting shows a multistoried tower house with figures of ibexes at the corners of the summit, suggesting that at least part of the houses of Qaryat matched the high houses of Yemen, which had multiple stories above stone foundations. The façades were – as finds confirm – decorated with patterns (al-Ansary 2010: 338, fig. 164). Precious utensils of silver, gilded silver, bronze, glass, and fine ceramics belonged to the household. The burial places of the kings and nobility were in stone-built chambers with a mausoleum or a tower on top. The upper part of a limestone figure was discovered nearby the tomb of the king Muʿawiya b. Rabiʾa (second century CE) and might be part of the mausoleum (al-Ansary 1982: 19–20). The fragment of a bronze funerary couch of one Saʿd ibn Malik is a beautiful example of Hellenistic art; a bust of Artemis is placed on a gilded fulcrum which ends in an elegant horse's head (al-Ansary 2010: 343). Around 300 CE the Kinda left the site, in order to settle in Hadramaut. Only a short time later the city was completely abandoned (al-Ansary 1982).

Yemen

The end of the millennium brought major changes. In 26–25 BCE the Roman prefect of Egypt, Aelius Gallus, appeared before the gates of Marib, by order of Augustus. He was not able to conquer Marib, though he destroyed the dam. But what was of really decisive importance was that now the Romans knew of the sea route and could control the Red Sea trade, gaining direct contact with the ports in South Arabia and India. This meant that the land-based trade between Hadramaut and the Mediterranean collapsed, as did the caravan cities. A new political power arose around the turn of the era in Yemen, when under the Himyarites the tribes of the highlands united themselves into a new kingdom. With the union of the kingdoms of Sabaʾ and Himyar, once again a kingdom arose that eventually included all the regions of Yemen (Robin 1998b).

Ports like Sumhuram (Khor Rori), Mouza (al-Mukha), Eudaemon Arabia (Aden), and Qaniʿ (Biʾr ʿAli) facilitated sea trade with India and the Mediterranean. Shabwa in Hadramaut claimed predominance in the area of trade. Copper, tin, coral, glass vessels, textiles, silver wares, pottery, and horses were imported (Robin 1998b: 263; Sidebotham 2012: 1054). In the first century BCE the palace of Shaqir (The Towering One) was erected in Shabwa. Although the palace was burned down by the Sabaean king Shaʿr Autar, *c.* 230 CE, it was sumptuously restored. This was a building of mud brick and wood with multiple stories above stone foundations and a courtyard with two-story side galleries (39 × 57 m) (see Figure 2.2). Thin alabaster slabs were placed in the coffered ceiling of the gallery. The octagonal, vine-covered pillars of the galleries were decorated with capitals depicting griffins, wall frescoes showed representations of women and various types of ornament (Breton 1992: 165–181). Costly furnishings, including ivory carvings, attest to domestic luxury. The décor had links both with regional architecture and late Hellenistic art of the Mediterranean world. Some bronze fragments indicate the existence of figural statues. How these might have looked can be sensed by oversized statues of two kings which stood as gifts in the reception room of a palace in Nakhlat al-Hamraʿ of the second century CE (Seipel 1998: 386). Top-quality bronzes were imported as shown by the treasure of Jabal al-ʿAud with the bust of Athena (Figure 2.5).

Fourth to Sixth Centuries CE

Yemen

Under the rule of the Himyarites, Yemen developed into a large kingdom with a "central government" which exerted a wide influence in the Arabian Peninsula and hence also over its tribes. After the unification of the South Arabian kingdom, the kings of Himyar sought to bring the Hijaz, Najd, and Hasa under their rule. But control over these newly incorporated regions was transferred to their vassals, the Kinda princes. King Abikarib Asʿad (374–446) was able to unite the tribes of Arabia and to create a kingdom that included nearly the entire peninsula; it did not survive his death, though. Nonetheless, not only was the basis laid for a political consolidation of all the tribes in the peninsula but also a period of relative peace was created, which favored cultural exchange (Gajda 2009: 51–56; Robin 2010: 86–88).

The capital city of the Himyar was Zafar in the highlands, while the former center of Sabaʾ also moved from Marib into the highlands, to Sanaa. Zafar (near Yarim) was already mentioned by Pliny, in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* (first century CE) and Ptolemy (second century CE), but the history of the city is hardly known. It was surrounded by a double wall of stone ashlar with nine gates and probably four towers. The fortress of Raidan, seat of the rulers of Himyar, which

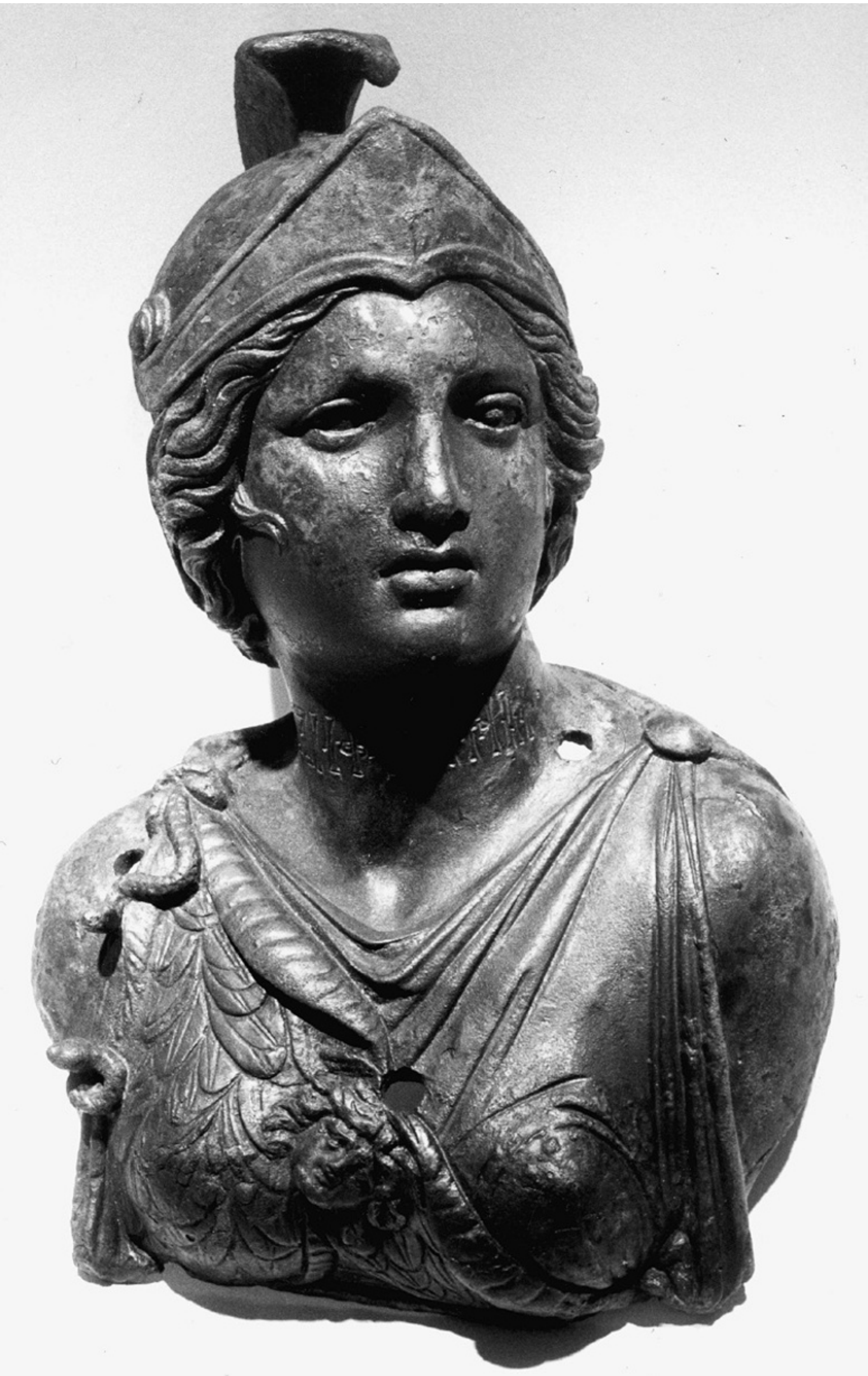

Figure 2.5 Jabal al-ʿAud, bust of Athena (first century BCE–first century CE). Source: Archäologische Berichte aus dem Yemen XIII, 2012, fig. 14. Reproduced with permission of I. Gerlach.

has not yet been investigated, dates from the early period. The names of some palaces are recorded, including Hargab, known from a surviving inscription indicating that the king Shurahbi'il Yaʿfur built it in 462. Bulls and lions decorated probably the cornice, whereas (human) bronze statues and figures of ibexes, lions, and panthers were perhaps placed on top of terraces (cf. Figure 2.7). According to the same inscription, the façades also bore various plant ornaments (Gajda 2009: 196–198; Müller 2011; Sima 2000: 109).

Relief panels of life-sized, frontally depicted notables in a flat, linear style were found, along with other figures. An independent style seems to have developed in the late period. The figures, which include fighting scenes with riders, are lively, plastic, exceptionally expressive, and completely cover the surface of the relief (Yule 2013: fig. 7, 3; 2007: fig. 92). The preference for vines, even the "inhabited scroll," is noteworthy. One of the most beautiful plaques in Zafar is decorated with a vine scroll composition, which is closed within itself. Softer in outline than sixth-century Coptic work, the ornament appears as a predecessor of the early Islamic Umayyad idiom (Figure 2.6).

Monotheism: Judaism and Christianity

In the course of the state unification under King Abikarib Asʿad, conversions to Judaism took place in Yemen and in the provinces, perhaps because of political factors (Robin 2003: 151). From the fifth century onwards, no dedicatory inscriptions to the gods survive. They were replaced by monotheistic inscriptions that invoke "rahmanan" or "dhu samawi," the "Lord of Heaven." The temples were already abandoned at the end of the fourth century, with their treasures plundered or placed in the state treasury.

As early as the fourth century, Zafar felt the impact of Judaism; at this time there was a Jewish community in Bayt Hadir near Sanaa which had apparently emigrated from Palestine (Gajda 2009: 226–231). Jews also lived in Najran and in the region of Wusab, west of Ibb. The Madhi to the southeast of Zafar, the Madhij and Murad tribes between Najran and Marib, and the Kinda in the western Hadramaut together formed a Jewish community. Judaism also spread among the Himyar, Kinda, Bani al-Harith, and Kinana.

Synagogues (*mkrb*) are attested by inscriptions in Zafar, Marib, Rayda, Naʿd, Najr, Dulaʿ, and Tanʿim. In Tanʿim the building is designated as a *masjid*, a term that later came to refer also to mosques. Najran must also have had synagogues for the Jewish inhabitants, but so far neither Christian nor Jewish cult buildings have been detected archaeologically (Robin 2009b: 209). Qaniʾ alone has apparently yielded a building that might be Christian, plus an excavated synagogue datable to the second half of the fourth century. It was rectangular in plan (5 × 7.7 m), with a portico and supports that bore the apparently flat roof (Sedov 2005: fig. 75).

Standing behind Judaism and Christianity were the two great contemporary powers of the period: Sasanian Iran and Byzantium, each seeking to prevail in the competition to dominate the Arab tribes. Emperor Constantius II (337–361) sent an embassy under Theophilos the Indian to the king, who allowed him to

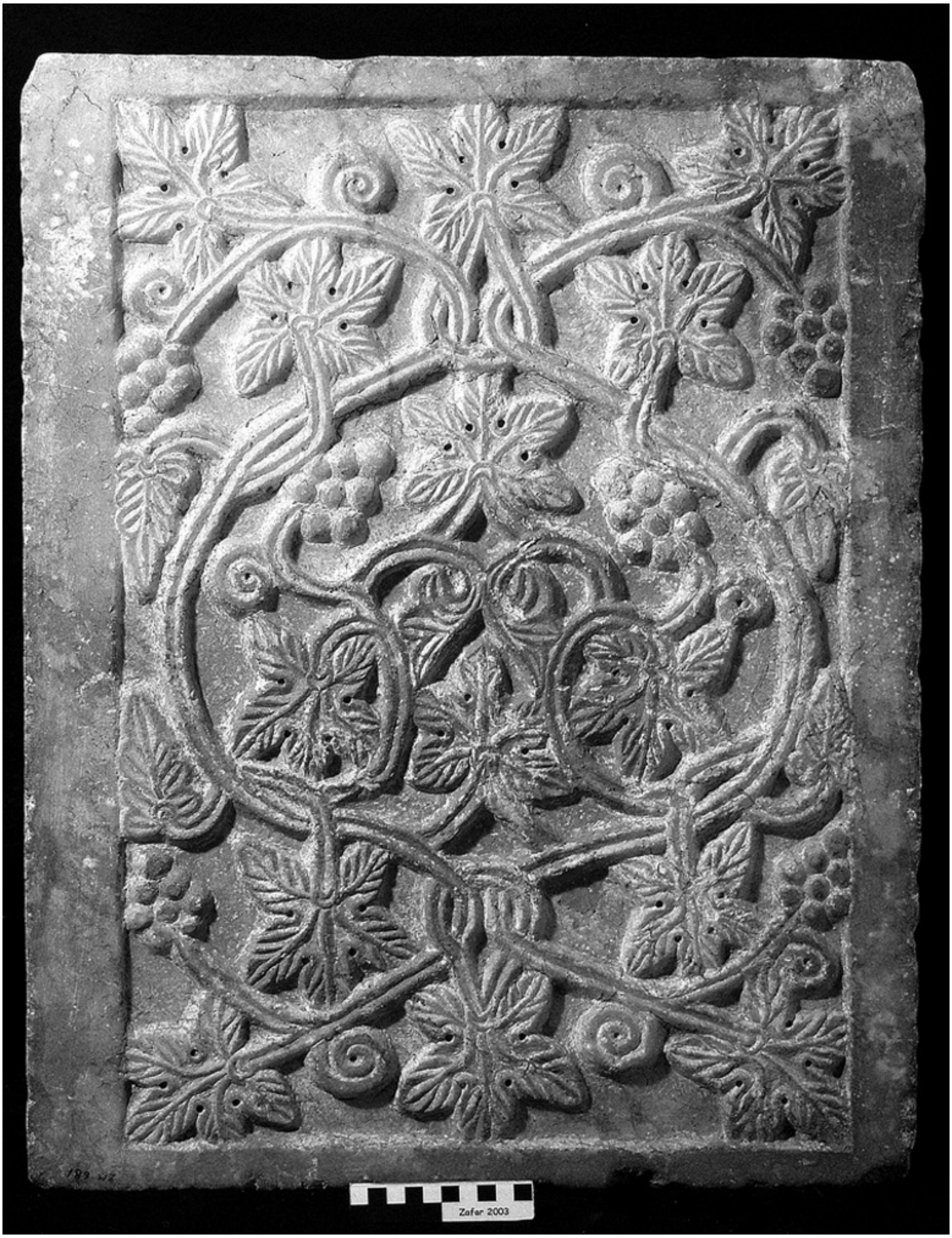

FIGURE 2.6 Zafar, plaque decorated with a vine scroll composition (sixth century CE). Source: P. Yule. Reproduced with permission.

build three churches for the Byzantine merchants (Nebes 2010: 36). One stood in Zafar, the others in Aden and in Qaniʾ. But evidence for early Christianity has not yet been identified archaeologically or on the basis of inscriptions before the late fifth century.

With the help of the Ethiopian Negus, a Christian Himyarite king, Maʿdikarib Yaʿfur (519–522), came to the throne. He supported the interests of Byzantium and undertook military campaigns against Arabia which even extended to the territory of the Lakhmid governors of the Sasanians in Mesopotamia. Thus Yemen entered into the centuries-long conflict between Rome–Byzantium and Iran. As a reaction against Christian Ethiopian rule, Yusuf Asʾar Yathʾar, a Jew from the tribe of the Yazʾanids or Himyar (referred to in Arabic literature as Dhu Nuwas), conquered Yemen between 521 and 523. He now promoted Judaism as the state religion and persecuted Ethiopian and Yemeni Christians. In 522 he destroyed the churches of Zafar and Mukha, in the regions of Tihama and Farasan. The year 523 saw the tragic massacre in Najran of Christians, who were reportedly burned in their church (Nebes 2010: 43–49). Najran with its churches – from time immemorial an important trading city – was a significant pilgrimage site for Arab Christians, as well as an economically flourishing city (Schiettecatte 2011: 295–304). Around 500, Emperor Anastasius (491–518) had sent a bishop named Silvanus there and thus introduced an ecclesiastical hierarchy. After the massacre, Emperor Justinian encouraged the Negus of Ethiopia, Kaleb Ella Asbeha, to attack Yemen and sent his fleet in support (Bowersock 2013: 92–105).

Yusuf Asʾar Yathʾar was killed in battle against the Ethiopians in 525. A Christian ruler was installed, but the Ethiopian commander Abraha (active between 535 and 565) deposed him. Abraha not only took over the kingdom but as a successor of the Himyarites also adopted their titulature and saw himself as the legitimate ruler of the Arabian Peninsula. Numerous churches were built during his reign, such as one in Marib that was dedicated around 549. The ambassadors of the Byzantine emperor Justinian I, the Sasanian ruler Khusraw Anushirwan I (531–579), the Ethiopian Negus Kaleb Ella Asbeha, and the phylarchs of the Ghassanids (Byzantine vassals) and Lakhmids came there, as is reported in the large inscription on the dam of Marib, a last record of the Sabaean script (Nebes 2004). The political power and self-image of the Ethiopian ruler as the lord of Arabia was thereby made evident. The domination of the Ethiopians was not destined to last. The Sasanian Shah, Khusraw Anushirwan, sent Wahriz to Yemen around 575, in order to end Ethiopian rule. For a short time around that year, the Yemenite Sayf ibn dhi Yazan came to power, only to surrender it to the Persian satraps. In 579 Yemen definitively became a Persian province. The last Persian satrap, Badhan, converted to Islam and the first congregational mosque in Sanaa (627–628) was reportedly built in his garden.

The cultural landscape of Yemen changed decisively with this development and many ancient cities fell into ruin. After the last great break of the dam between 575 and 600, Marib also finally lost its importance. Zafar, the Himyarite capital, with its Raydan Palace, had remained the center of the kingdom up to the rule of Abraha. Sanaa was the seat of government under Abraha and should become – according to him – a significant place of Christian pilgrimage. The famous castle of Ghumdan, which in Arab tradition is said to have been a masterpiece of Arab architecture, was probably built around 200 CE. Preserved in cultural memory, it became a model for later palaces. In the literature, the height of Ghumdan,

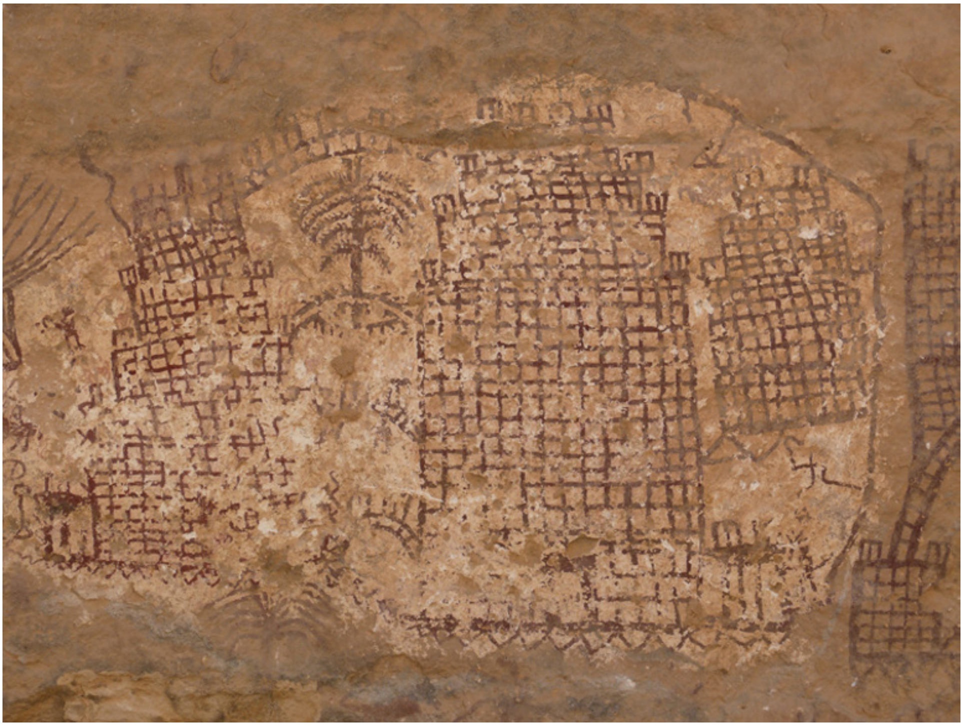

FIGURE 2.7 Saqaf/Khaulan painting of a castle (probably Ghumdan, second–third century CE). Source: Al-Salami 2012: 93. Reproduced with permission.

its transparent roof of alabaster, and its rich interior furnishings are praised. Colored stone inlay covered the façades. The tradition that lions of bronze roaring in the wind stood at the corners of the uppermost room, with its alabaster ceiling, is reminiscent of those reported in the epigraphic description of Shurahbiʾil Yaʿfur's palace at Zafar. Paintings on a rock projection in Jarf al-Yahudi near Sanaa (second to third century) probably illustrate Ghumdan with its numerous stories and statues of ibexes on top of the terraces (al-Salami 2012: 97–98) (Figure 2.7).

Churches

In the fifth–sixth century, churches stood in Zafar, Mukha, Ibb, Baʿdan, Qaniʾ and Aden, in the Farasan Islands, in Soqotra and probably in the Tihama. After his victory over Yusuf, Kaleb Ella Asbeha built three churches in Zafar, while Abraha built the churches of Marib and Hamer around 525–530 (Robin 2009b: 172).

The mosque of Nabi Allah Jarjis or Sarjis in Tarim, Hadramaut, recalls a church dedicated to these saints and attests to a connection to Rusafa in north Syria (Serjeant 1959). Three churches stood in Najran: the Church of the Ascension of Christ, the Church of the Holy Mother of God, and the Church (Martyrion) of the Holy Martyrs and the Glorious Arethas. The first of these was considered the most beautiful church in Najran. It is probably there that the Christians seeking refuge were burnt by the troops of Yusuf. The Martyrion of Harith ibn Kaʿb (Arethas) was built by his family around 525. It was furnished with mosaics and had a cover of "gold," which may indicate a coffered ceiling. Figures of saints in "gold and silver" can be thought of either as pictorial representations or as reliefs (Finster 2010: 75–76). As the seat of a bishop Najran must thus have boasted architecture suitable for its spiritual leader. The Church of the Holy Mother of God lay outside the city by a stadium.

Book culture and theological knowledge were part of this church life, which enabled the city to become a cultural center. One can assume that – as in all monasteries – texts were copied and that the culture of writing perhaps contributed to the development of Arabic from the Aramaic alphabet. Today, apart from a few graffiti in cross form, it is only ceramic sherds with crosses, and possibly the graves of some martyrs, that attest to Christian culture in Najran (Schiettecatte 2011: fig. 9; Zarins *et al.* 1983: pl. 39).

The cathedral of the Ethiopian ruler Abraha in Sanaa is known only through the detailed description of al-Azraqi (ninth century). Sanaa – as mentioned earlier – was planned by Abraha to become the see of a bishop. With the translation of the bones of the martyrs of Najran or Zafar, it also became a holy pilgrimage site. Al-Azraqi's description is ambiguous about the ground plan of the church. It certainly matched the size and proportions of the Church of St. Mary of Zion at Axum in Ethiopia (160 × 40 cubits), but it also matched the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Featuring three aisles with a domed chancel and perhaps a transept, it was furnished with precious materials. Emperor Justinian sent mosaics, marble, and artisans. The architecture of the church followed Ethiopian models, while its embellishment with mosaics, marble inlay, and intarsia was characteristic of Byzantine urban art. A starry sky decorated the vaulting and three crosses occupied the center of the dome (Finster and Schmidt 1994). Whether the round pillars covered with vine ornament and the capitals in the Great Mosque of Sanaa actually came from this cathedral must remain an open question (Finster 2010: figs. 9 and 10). There were other churches in Sanaa whose arcades could be seen as late as the tenth century. In any case the two capitals with crosses in front of the mihrab of the Great Mosque of Sanaa fully match models in Axum.

The Gulf Region

The fall of the cities of this region in the fourth and fifth centuries did not mean that the country was abandoned. Rather it seems that the tribes were no longer settled and that only smaller settlements and weekly markets remained. Only in the eighth and ninth centuries was there new settlement of the coastal regions (Cuny and Mouton 2009: 122; Morony 2004). Churches and monasteries existing both on the offshore islands and the mainland continued to foster cultural expression.

A bishop is attested in Qatar already at the start of the third century, and by *c.* 410 there were a number of bishops. The region was considered the core center of

East Syrian Christianity. In Qatar and Soqotra the Church had a metropolitan see, where Christians are attested up to the ninth through eleventh centuries. There was an archbishopric in Masmahij (Bahrain), and the see of a Nestorian bishop is recorded at Mazun (Suhar) and Hagar (Hofuf) in the sixth century (Carter 2008). One can assume that there were also monasteries similar to those on the islands of the Gulf (Potts 1990: 338–339), which were important cultural centers.

On the mainland, the remains of a church in Jubail, as also the funerary stelai in the area, point to a large community living there. This church, with a rectangular plan of about 15–20 m^2, had a chancel with pastophoria. A row of round supports on the side walls of the chancel apparently carried a vault. Vine scrolls at the springing of the vaults formed the only decoration. Otherwise there were only incised crosses on the pillars of the chancel area. A sixth-century date can be assumed. A church was also found in the vicinity of Thaj, as well as a large Christian cemetery in al-Hinna. Since the churches followed the East Syrian rite, they stand in close formal connection to church architecture in Mesopotamia. The church of Qusur/Failaka provides a good example. It was a building of 35 × 9 m, with narthex, wide central nave, and side aisles that communicated with the nave only via narrow arcades. The vaulted chancel was closed by a blank wall (Salles *et al.* 2013: 242–254, 260–263).

The Northwest

Hijaz and Yamama

With the extension of Himyarite power to the north around 440–450 CE, ʿAsir, Hijaz, and Yamama fell under its influence. Around 450 the area was termed the territory of the "Arabs of the highlands and the coast," which was under the authority of the Hujrids, themselves from the tribe of Kinda. Their seat was in Batn ʿAqil, a site that has not yet been investigated archaeologically. The kingdom extended from the Hijaz to Qatar and in the north up to the border of al-Madaʾin and Taymaʾ. According to Procopius (520 CE), they also ruled the large oases in the sixth century. So the tribal regions controlled by phylarchs in the service of the three most important political powers of Himyar, Byzantium and Iran, now bordered each other. Each of the phylarchs represented the interests of the ruler as well as their own (Robin 2010, 86–88). Whether the Hujrids were Christians still remains uncertain. The Christian Princess Hind, who married the Lakhmid al-Mundhir III (r. 503–554 CE with interruption), founded a convent in al-Hira, the Arabic foundation inscription of which has been transmitted (Robin 2008: 186). Christians and monasteries are also attested in Kilwa, in Midyan, in the Wadi al-Qura, and in the northern Hijaz (Farès 2013; Gilmore *et al.* 1982: 19 and pl. 19A; Shahid 1989: 294 and 526).

As mentioned above, general decline set in at the Arabian Peninsula after *c.* 550. The hegemony of the Kinda had ended *c.* 530. The Byzantine emperor discharged the Ghassanid phylarchs, providing a buffer with the Sasanians, in *c.* 581–582. Likewise, the Sasanian Shah Khusraw Parviz eliminated the Lakhmids, who had served a similar role for the Sasanians, for political reasons in 602, seeking to fill the political vacuum. Yemen became a Sasanian province and the northern regions are also thought to have been under direct Sasanian control (Retsö 2004: 114–115). The general insecurity that set in after *c.* 550 is to be understood as the period of the "Jahiliyya" (pre-Islamic ignorance) referred to in Arabic historical writing (Robin 2009a: 11–13; 2012: 29).

The aristocracy in the large oases of the Hijaz were Jews or inclined to Judaism. A Nabataean inscription in Mada'in Salih (Hegra), dated 356 CE was written by a descendant of Samuel, the prince of Tayma' (Robin 2010: 97). Yathrib and Mecca were significant settlements, while Ta'if, surrounded by a wall and possessing a fortress, served as the summer residence of the Meccans.

The oasis of Dumat al-Jandal, with its castle of Marid, was the seat of King Ukaydir ibn ʿAbd al-Malik of Kinda, a Christian who ruled over this region. As an important station for the caravan trade, Dumat had a famous *suq* (Loreto 2012: 178). According to tradition there were numerous monasteries in the surrounding gardens. Mada'in Salih lost its importance for trade only under the Abbasids, as the route was diverted to Iraq. Al-Mabiyat (Qurh) is also said to have been a trading center in the pre-Islamic period which flourished in Islamic times, as did Jurash/Asir (al-ʿUmayr 2010).

Yathrib (Medina)

According to Arabic tradition, Medina consisted of numerous settlements in which different tribes lived. ʿAus and Khazraj emigrated from Yemen in the second half of the fifth century and in Yathrib met smaller tribal groups and the Jewish tribes of the Banu Qurayza, Banu Nadir, and Qaynuqa'. They had either come to Yathrib very early after the destruction of Jerusalem or were Arab tribes who had adopted Judaism, which is more likely. The Banu Qurayza and Banu Nadir practiced agriculture, while the Qaynuqa' were merchants and smiths (weapons). There were said to have been 300 goldsmiths in Zuhra, one of the largest settlements (Lecker 2009: 31). A close connection to the Lakhmids of al-Hira was inevitable, insofar as the tribes had to pay taxes to the *marzuban al-badiya*, the Sasanian governor (Kister 1980, III: 145–146).

Yathrib was divided into a privileged upper city and a lower city. Being less an enclosed city than scattered quarters among fields and gardens, it constituted a rich oasis. The cityscape was dominated by the *atam* (singular *utum*), tower-like houses, which probably resembled the Yemeni type and originally – like them – bore names. The settlements had a variable number of *atam*, but according to Ibn Zabala (d. *c.* 815) there were over 90 such buildings (Lecker 1995: 32). In addition, palaces or castles (Arabic *qasr*, plural *qusur*) and fortresses (Arabic *hisn*, plural *husun*) are mentioned, which could also have served as towers of refuge. Simple houses were designated as *manzil* (plural *manazil*). Al-Isfahani in the tenth-century *Kitab al-Aghani* says that Persian architects built the first tower with crenellations. In addition "Nabataeans" were active as architects (Shahid 2002: 73, n.36).

The tradition that the Umayyad caliph Muʿawiya (r. 661–680) converted two castles (*qusur*) into a fortress (*hisn*), suggests that the term *qasr* referred to a castle defended with towers (Lecker 1995: 11). In al-ʿAliya, the upper city, stood large fortresses (*husun*) that had storage rooms and water. The fortifications in the surrounding countryside had supplies for a year, stored water, and were practically impregnable. There were four markets in total. After his arrival, the Prophet Muhammad established a new *suq* in 630, for which no taxes were collected (Lecker 1986; Kister 1980 IX: 274 and 276).

Synagogues and a Bayt al-Midras (house of learning or reading) served as religious centers for the Jewish tribes and cultural life. According to al-Isfahani, the image of the Arab tribal leader Malik ibn al-ʿAjlan was to be seen in the synagogue, so it is clear that images, including portraits, were considered normal (Lecker 1995: 41–42, 1998, III: 264, 271; Shahid 1989: 81, n.76). No universally recognized polytheist sanctuary existed within the city.

Only with the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca did his property, place of prayer, and living quarters create a focus that unified the Muslim faithful. The cityscape also changed after he came. The Jewish tribes were eventually expelled or killed. The property of the Jewish tribe, the Banu Qurayza, was divided among the Muhajirun (the Muslim emigrants) (Kister 1990, VIII: 94, 96). Later on the third caliph, ʿUthman, had the tower houses that were symbols of tribal autonomy demolished (Lecker 1995: 13).

Many Meccans, and above all Umayyads, moved to Medina, where they were not welcomed and in part expelled again. Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, the major businessman and later Umayyad caliph, had purchased and annexed land for cultivation. The Sadd al-Khanaq dam near Medina, with its inscription, attests to his investment that yielded him 150 000 camel-loads of wheat, among other things (al-Râshid 2008). He also expropriated the market created by the Prophet and erected two houses there. The later Umayyad caliph Hisham ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 723–743) demolished them and built over the same plot a large complex comprising shops in the ground floor and rooms for rent above. Perhaps this new central *suq* was similar to the aforementioned building excavated at Qaryat al-Faw (Kister 1980, XI: 13, IX: 275).

As a place hallowed by the Prophet's memory, Medina became a pilgrimage site that attracted crowds of the faithful after his death in 632. His property with its place of prayer and adjoining houses were built with limited means and locally available materials: mud bricks for the walls, palm trunks as supports for the two aisled prayer space along the qibla side, and the pergolas (just as today mosques are still built in the Tihama, the Red Sea coast of Yemen). To what extent a more ambitious, or at least solid architecture was intended must remain an open question (Johns 1999: 99–102, 108–112). The growing numbers of the faithful compelled the caliphs ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab and ʿUthman ibn Affan to expand the building in 644 and 648–649, respectively. In 706 the Umayyad caliph al-Walid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz, the governor of

Medina, were the first to dare to construct a new building that required the demolition of the holy place, including the so-called huts of Muhammad's women. The mosque comprised a rectangle of *c.* 180 × 210 m, with a five-naved prayer hall and a courtyard lined with arcades of multiple bays. This new mosque, with its lofty columns covered with stucco (*naʿura*) and carrying a ceiling, followed a traditional Arab model. Only the courtyard arcades, the coffered ceiling, and the mosaics that according to Ibn Zabala (*c.* 815) depicted paradise belonged to the Mediterranean architectural tradition (Finster 1972: 133).

Mecca

The rise of Mecca began with the decline of al-Hira, previously the urban center of Arab cultural and political life. While Yathrib and Najran had, from time immemorial, flourished by means of agriculture, manufacturing, and trade, Mecca became a new mercantile city in the sixth century (Potts 1988: 136). Admittedly, Mecca did not originally lie on the incense road, but in the sixth century it had links with Syria, Yemen, and Mesopotamia through other routes. Nor was it originally a trading emporium. Instead, it was a religious center that pilgrims visited in sacred months. Around Mecca were the holy places of Hira and Mina, now incorporated into the Haram.

The city gained importance under the Prophet Muhammad's tribe, the Quraysh, which came to power in the fifth century and took over the meritorious but also lucrative office of providing the pilgrims with food and water. The Jurhum were originally said to have fulfilled this task, and after them the Khuzaʿa, allegedly immigrants from Yemen. Through negotiations with the respective tribes, the Quraysh were able to lead their trade caravans safely to Syria, Egypt, Yemen, and Ethiopia. During the pilgrimage period, general peace prevailed, so that large markets could be held, as in ʿUkaz, south of Mecca. Jewels, perfume, textiles, and skins (for leather and parchment) were traded, and much else (Groom 1998: 55, Haldon 2010: 57–60; Robin 2012: 29). After about 450, Qusayy ibn Kilab ibn Murra, an ancestor of the Prophet, reorganized the city, making it into a significant religious and hence economic center (Shahid 1989: 350). His four sons, of whom ʿAbd al-Manaf was a direct ancestor of Muhammad, took over the provision of food and water for pilgrims.

Mecca too was divided into a lower and upper city, although the former was reserved for the influential families owing to its proximity to the Kaʿba. The prestigious Dar an-Nadwa, the house of Qusayy ibn Kilab, was where the elders gathered for consultations. It stood in immediate proximity to the Kaʿba and was later acquired by the Umayyad caliph Muʿawiya for an enormous sum. In the lower city, according to al-Azraqi, the houses were oriented toward the Kaʿba. The residences (*dar*) were sometimes extensive and had courtyards for storing goods. Al-Azraqi lists ashlar masonry houses that were sold or preserved and rebuilt as memorial sites in the Islamic period, such as that of Khadija, the wife of Muhammad. As an innovation, the caliph Muʿawiya attracted attention by constructing houses of brick and plaster. The Dar Saʿd had a façade with sculptured stones, which may perhaps be understood as *spolia* (Kister 1980, II: 84–85). In the *dar al-mal* (treasury) the poor and sick were cared for by public funds. There was also a bath. Following established custom, wares were produced and sold in specific quarters and streets (cobblers, blacksmiths, and so on). Weekly markets were held in specified areas.

Mecca experienced a major economic boom under the caliphate of Muʿawiya, who supported its development, bought, restored, or erected houses, installed wells and canals, and also planted orchards in the surrounding land. He also invested in the nearby summer resort of Taʾif. The Arabic inscriptions on two dams in the vicinity of Medina and Taʾif bear witness to his activity (al-Râshid 2008; Miles 1948). The city thus grew far beyond its old boundaries and also into zones that had originally been reserved for pilgrims. But the economic boom soon ended, only to be revived in the early Abbasid period.

The Kaʿba

The Kaʿba formed the central shrine of Mecca, sanctioned by the Prophet Muhammad as the "bayt Allah" (House of God), and it remained the center for the Muslim faithful. Its history, like that of Mecca, is transmitted only through Islamic historical texts. Probably a shrine here was a focus of veneration from early on. The perennial spring of Zamzam near the Kaʿba, which yields slightly salty water, is also important. The restoration work that the anti-caliph Ibn al-Zubayr (683–692) undertook after the destruction of the Kaʿba by Husayn ibn Numayr in 683 during a second civil war revealed that the first construction had a rectangular plan with an apse on the northwest side. All later rebuildings rested on these foundations. The corners were oriented to the four cardinal points, as was usual in oriental temple construction. The tribe of Jurhum was credited with constructing the Kaʿba, perhaps as a roofless temple, around the fourth or fifth centuries. Qusayy ibn Kilab is named as the next builder, and it was he who dedicated the building to "Allah." According to Islamic tradition, his roofless Kaʿba was draped with a costly Yemeni textile (Wensinck and Jomier 1978: 318; Wüstenfeld 1858: 85).

The Kaʿba probably acquired its cubic form (25 × 20 cubits, height 9 cubits = 12.5 × 10 × 4.5 m) at that time and formed a closed space that could be entered only from the southeast corner. Portraits of prominent Meccans, such as Qusayy ibn Kilab, were to be seen on the walls (Shahid 1989: 81, n.76). After a fire in *c.* 600 the structure had to be rebuilt. The dimensions at ground level remained the same, but the height was raised to 9 m. Two rows of three supports each divided the room; the entrance on the southeast corner was raised and thus could be reached only by a ladder. The walls of alternating stone and wood courses followed Yemeni or Ethiopian building traditions. A certain Baqum (Embaqom), a guest worker from Egypt or Ethiopia, is named as the master builder (Creswell 1951). Frescoes decorated the interior; they included the Virgin and Child, presumably represented as the Theotokos accompanied by angels. Abraham and Ismael could also be seen, and even a ram, subject matter that could also be found in contemporary churches such as that of Sinai (King 2004). It is uncertain whether these frescoes were newly painted or belonged to the building of Qusayy ibn Kilab. An image (perhaps a sculpture) of the pre-Islamic deity Hubal is also said to have been in the interior (Robin 2012: 33). The Prophet had all of the images removed with the exception of Mary and the Christ Child (Rubin 1986). The meaning ascribed to the Black Stone at this time is obscure, but tradition relates that Muhammad himself placed it in the southeast corner when the structure had been rebuilt in *c.* 600 by his tribe, the Quraysh (Wensinck and Jomier 1978: 319).

The rectangular, three-aisled ground plan of the building, the bent entrance at the southeast corner and also the dimensions of the shrine correspond to a temple type that was widespread in the pre-Islamic period, as for example in Hadramaut, the precursor of which can be seen in the temple of Maʿin (Qarnawu) and elsewhere. After the destruction of the Kaʿba by Husayn ibn Numayr in 683, Ibn al-Zubayr sought to reproduce its "original state" by restoring the apsidal curve (*hijr*) that had been removed and thereby enlarging the building to 16 × 11.5 m. He also introduced two entrances placed opposite each other to permit easy passage. He destroyed the earlier arrangement by eliminating the three aisles and introducing a single row of columns in the axis. The space was thereby left neutral, without orientation. Ibn al-Zubayr brought ancient columns, capitals, and even mosaics from the church of Abraha in Sanaa. Upon defeating Ibn al-Zubayr in 691, his rival, the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 685–705), once again separated the Hijr and thereby reduced the length of the Kaʿba to 12 m but preserved the height of 13.5 m. He also ordered the southwest gate to be walled up. The Hijr, however, was still considered to belong to the Kaʿba, especially since it was believed to contain the graves of Hagar and her son Ismael (who built the structure with his father Abraham according to Muslim tradition). A low wall marked the Hijr and linked it to the Kaʿba. Al-Walid (r. 705–715), the son and successor of ʿAbd al-Malik completed the decoration of the Kaʿba with precious marble panels in white, green, and red that were framed by gold strips placed in two rows one above the other. Under the gilded ceiling that probably showed five transparent alabaster slabs ran an inscription band in mosaic. Small gold plates covered the door of the sanctuary (Finster 1972: 130).

Al-Walid rebuilt the Masjid al-Haram, namely the holy precinct surrounding the Kaʿba, in a similar manner. The fourth caliph ʿUthman (644–656) had already replaced an earlier clay wall with a roofed corridor, which ʿAbd al-Malik converted into a peristyle. Al-Walid created a more lavish arcade with marble columns and mosaic revetments that enclosed the holy precinct. The beauty of the marble and the marble work was praised in the literature; the mosaics probably represented "scenes of Paradise" as in the Prophet's mosque in Medina (Finster 1972: 129–130). A shrine thus developed whose visual language was largely borrowed from the Mediterranean Late Antique tradition but whose central focus, the Kaʿba, stood firmly in the Arab tradition.

The Islamic Seventh Century

The so-called Jahiliyya of the sixth century was marked by the collapse of the Himyarite Empire, which had controlled the Arabian Peninsula for a century. Around 570, after having conquered Yemen, the Sasanians tried to expand further into the peninsula, but the Arab tribes repelled these moves (Retsö 2004: 115–116). The coming of Islam early in the next century proved decisive. The economic boom in the holy places was fueled not only by the faithful and by pilgrims but also by the new, intensive agriculture that was organized among others by the Umayyads. Now dams with reservoirs and irrigation for agriculture were introduced to the Hijaz, apparently as innovations. In this respect the Umayyads followed the Sasanians, who in the sixth century expanded agriculture by intensive irrigation (El-Ali 1959; Morony 2004: 184).

A few cities in the north continued to function or indeed prosper, like Rabadha, Mashmahij, Qurh, and Tayma', as did Jurash in ʿAsir. But neither Mecca nor Medina became a political center of the Islamic empire. Rather, after 661, the first Umayyad caliph Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan raised Damascus to the status of capital and thereby turned to the Mediterranean world. With his remodeling of the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, ʿAbd al-Malik established a major Islamic sanctuary to the north of the two Holy Cities. In it he deployed forms derived from Christian sacred architecture, thereby arousing the opposition of conservative circles in Mecca and Medina, who held fast to the ideal of a "simple" life and condemned the extravagance of the Umayyad architectural idiom.

Medina became renowned as a city of prosperity and luxury, but its handicrafts industry collapsed after the departure of the Jewish artisans. The same thing happened to the industry, operated by Christians, that produced the famous cloth of Najran and Maʿafir (Hitti 1916: 102–104). A general revival began in the eighth and ninth centuries with the advent of the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad, who developed the hajj route and ensured the import of luxury goods from Iraq. But so far excavations have not concentrated on the early Islamic period. Nevertheless the Arabian Peninsula no longer experienced the cultural and artistic flowering of earlier times. That said, the visual arts not only were imported into Arabia, but also were produced there. The foundations of the "new" Islamic art were painting, sculpture, and above all architecture, and all of these were well established in the cultural life of the peninsula.

It was decisive for the future that the Umayyad caliphs were to some extent aware of their own cultural history. The events and especially the conflicts of the sixth century, triggered by the contemporary political vacuum following the collapse of the Himyarite state and the Sasanian bid for power, were finally resolved in the "Ayyam al-ʿArab" (Days of the Arabs). The glory of the Himyarite kings (singular *tubbaʿ*) was remembered, according to the *Kitab al-Tijan fi muluk Himyar* (The Book of Crowns on the Kings of Himyar) by Ibn Hisham (d. *c.* 833), as the "immediate predecessor and pattern of the Umayyads" (Retsö 2005–2006: 232). Perhaps their palaces were distant forerunners of the Umayyad palaces of Syria, such as that at Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi.

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3

The Formation of Religious and Caliphal Identity in the Umayyad Period: The Evidence of the Coinage

Luke Treadwell

States, like human beings, need to be clothed in suitable apparel in order to secure a place in the world that suits their self-image. The clothing that states manufacture for themselves serves to disguise the nakedness of power and to support the ruler's claim to legitimate governance. In pre-modern times, this was accomplished by highlighting the ruler's practical capacity for leadership and his fulfillment of the divine sanction that underpinned the mandate to govern. The following brief inquiry will look at the elaboration of the public face of the Umayyad state under the early caliphs, Muʿawiya b. Abi Sufyan (r. 661–680) and ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwan (r. 685–705). A clear distinction will be maintained between two modes of expression of identity. The focus will be primarily directed at items such as coins, monumental architecture, and chancery documentation, which constituted the public identity of the state by virtue of bearing the caliphal imprimatur. Other more restricted expressions of the ruler's identity included poetry declaimed within the caliphal court, which was directed at local elite audiences and informed by a style of praise poetry that had its origin in pre-Islamic tribal courtly environments. Although particular consideration will be given to the evidence of the coinage, we begin with a summary of the wider context.

As conquerors of the world of late antiquity, the early Muslims found themselves the heirs to two highly elaborated traditions of imperial governance, which were expressed in a rich visual culture. To take the better attested of the two

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traditions, the Byzantine: here the power of the emperor was supported by an annual program of visits to holy places, where he took part in religious ceremonies; by the distribution throughout the empire of the imperial image, which "personified" the ruler's presence and served as a focus of his adoration; and the cultivation of a titulature and an iconography of religious and imperial symbolism which served to remind subjects of his crucial role in their well-being (Belting 1994: 102, 107). The new rulers of the Near East, who were catapulted to power by their rapid military triumphs from the 630s onwards, inherited the physical remains of the Byzantine imperial system, in the form of buildings and objects, and the skilled labor which produced them. In Terry Allen's view the material culture of the Umayyads was fundamentally constrained by the availability of these resources. Umayyad art was thus a branch of the art of late antiquity while the new indigenous artistic repertoire, which can properly be called Islamic, rather than (late) late antique, only began to emerge when the Umayyads were replaced by their Abbasid successors (Allen 1988: chapter 1).[1]

One remarkable aspect of early Islamic material culture has puzzled investigators for a long time: this is the almost complete absence of surviving material evidence which might help us to understand the contribution made by the Sufyanids, the first branch of the Umayyad dynasty, which came to power in 661, to the formation of the hybrid material culture of the early period. Few objects of a distinctively Islamic character survive from the first seven decades of the Muslim calendar, other than inscriptions, mainly lapidary epigraphs, some administrative papyri, and a small number of poorly excavated and highly contentious archaeological sites. By contrast, by the beginning of the eighth century, under the second branch of the Umayyads known as the Marwanids, there is an abundance of evidence of many forms, including coinage, buildings, and milestones. One explanation for the lack of earlier material was that the Sufyanid state was informally organized and lacked a centralized infrastructure, so that it was incapable of producing the items which normally characterize statal presence. Jeremy Johns concludes that the first Sufyanid caliph, Muʿawiya, "attempted to found his monarchy in Syria upon the material trappings of kingship, rather than upon the business of government" (Johns 2003: 424). This bold statement relies mainly on textual and inscriptional references to present a picture of a ruler who maintained himself in power by acting like a king, rather than building robust institutions of state.

Whatever the true nature of the Sufyanid state – and recent commentators have proposed that informal administrative structures disguised a powerful state which undertook successful actions against external enemies and maintained internal peace and prosperity for two decades (Foss 2002; Hoyland 2006) – assertions of the Sufyanid caliphs' aspirations to kingship are misleading. The Syriac text which describes Muʿawiya's accession expressly notes that unlike other kings, he did not wear a crown. The later Umayyads never wore crowns, maintained a simple court which lacked elaborate ritual, and generally remained accessible to their subjects (Grabar 1977; Marsham 2009). Evidence for Umayyad pretensions to royal status are frequently attested on the basis of the decoration and forms of their *qusur* (palaces) (e.g., Ettinghausen 1972), but none of this is admissible as testimony to caliphal attitudes, since no proven attestation of caliphal patronage, as opposed to that of the Umayyad elite, exists in any of these palatial sites.

The aversion to kingship, which emerged as a central feature of Islamic political thought as early as the Prophet's lifetime, was compounded in Muʿawiya's case by the conditions under which he maintained his authority. As leader of an acephalous tribal confederation in which power was devolved to the *ashraf* (tribal leaders), Muʿawiya chose a style of rule which allowed him to present himself as a *primus inter pares*. His celebrated personal qualities of *hilm* (patient forbearance) and *muruwwa* (manly dignity) were calibrated to mimic those recognized in a tribal environment as the defining characteristics of a successful tribal leader. An important indicator of the nonroyal nature of Muʿawiya's style of governance was his accessibility to his subjects and his toleration of behaviors that would have excited violent reactions from a king. A story relates an incident which must have taken place before the installation of the *maqsura*, a special enclosure in the mosque that was reserved for the exclusive use of the caliphal entourage (see below). A young tribesman who had placed himself in the row behind Muʿawiya at the time of prayer, reached forward and put his hand on the prostrating caliph's ample posterior in order to win a wager: he was only gently, if firmly, reprimanded for his audacity (Lammens 1908: 100, citing Qalqashandī 1903: 292). The tale may or may not be true. But its preservation indicates the extraordinary degree to which Muʿawiya's rule was perceived to contravene the dictates of royal hauteur, in a manner that would have been unthinkable for a late antique emperor.

Although Muʿawiya was the exemplar of Umayyad "shaykhly" authority, the style of rule that he established endured long after his death. At court, the caliphs' panegyrists did indeed hail them as "kings," just as tribal chiefs had been acclaimed "kings" in the Jahiliyya, the so-called period of ignorance that preceded Islam (Athamina 1998; Marsham 2009: 109). Their poets also lauded them as the best of men, the dispensers of justice, the guides to salvation, and the inheritors of Prophetic grace (Crone and Hinds 1986). Moreover, the realities of government compelled Muʿawiya to take steps to facilitate his exercise of power: among many innovations, he is charged with forming a personal bodyguard, creating the *maqsura* within the mosque, oppressing members of the Prophet's family, and, above all, restricting succession to the caliphate to his own son (Hawting 1986: 12–13).

But although monarchs by any measure the Umayyads did not present themselves as late antique kings or emperors. The accusations leveled against them from the early eighth century onwards, charging them with acting as *muluk* (kings), rather than *khulafaʾ* (caliphs), illustrate the widespread horror of royal pretension among early Muslims. The catalogue of misdemeanors with which the Umayyads were charged towards the end of their rule arose from the perception of their rule as tyranny (*jawr*), which in the eyes of their accusers was the equivalent of kingly behavior, since tyrants were automatically assumed to be kings (Crone 2005: 6–7, 44–47). Even though their dominions surpassed the empires of Byzantium and Sasanian Iran, the style adopted by early Umayyad caliphs appears closer to the paradigm of rulership established by the Umayyads' predecessors as regional Arab rulers, the Ghassanids of Jabiya, than it does to the imperial model (Fisher 2011). The Ghassanids displayed no claims to royal status beyond the titles conferred on them by their Byzantine masters, yet built extensively and arbitrated disputes that arose between their subjects (Hoyland 2009: 118, 120).

The powerful disincentive against the public projection of any form of power that resembled the old imperial models meant that there was little motivation for the development of an iconography of caliphal authority or the religious symbolism that might have sustained it. The ruler demonstrated his right to rule by means of the practical display of his efficacy: his defense of the *umma*'s territory, the pious enactment of devotions in the mosque, and the dispensation of justice. Emblems of legitimation, such as inherited objects associated with the Prophet or earlier caliphs, including the Prophet's *minbar* and mihrab, his staff and cloak, the whip of the caliph ʿUmar, certainly played a role in the Abbasids' program of self-legitimation. They were important also in the Umayyad period, but evidence for their systematic exploitation is lacking. Whatever their role as validating signs of caliphal legitimacy, these were never exploited as symbols, in the way that the "cross on steps," which appeared on Byzantine coinage was in seventh-century Byzantium. Early Islam lacked both the deeply rooted visual culture which might have transformed such emblems into symbols and a priestly class who would have endorsed, explained, and elaborated such symbolic systems.

The Evidence of the Coinage[2]

Islamic coins have provided a rich source of evidence for historians of the early Islamic period. Coins in all three metals (gold, silver, and copper) survive in considerable quantities, the earliest struck just a few years after the Battle of Yarmouk in 636, up to the end of the Umayyad caliphate in 750 (Pottier, Schulze, and Schulze 2008). For the seventh century, they offer insights into monetary and administrative practices on several different levels, from the caliphal perspective, to that of the regional governor, to the city governor and beyond, into the world of the unofficial mint. This numismatic evidence, though restricted in the range of data it can offer, lays claim to some unique properties as a source of historical documentation. The precious metal coins are attributable both geographically and chronologically and when studied in sequence can be construed as an evidential chain, allowing a reading of the choices made by their designers that illustrates both failures as well as successes. Copper coins, though less amenable to attribution in time and space, supply a dense record of patterns and styles.

Umayyad coinage can be divided into three phases, which reflect changing attitudes towards the late antique monetary heritage. The first and longest of these spanned the early years of the Muslim conquest of Syria to the early 690s. In both the Mediterranean coastlands in the west and the former Sasanian territories in the east, the networks of monetary production and circulation that predated the Islamic conquests were maintained with minimal alteration. In Syria, local copper production followed a similar model to that established during the Persian occupation of 614, while gold and copper coins from the Constantinople mint found their way into the Syrian monetary stock. In the east, the silver mints of Iraq and Iran were reopened in the 650s and produced accurate replicas of the broad-flan high-quality silver coins that had been issued in huge quantities by the Sasanians (Album and Goodwin 2002: 1–73). This *conservative* phase was brought to an end by the *fitna* or second civil war, when the Sufyanids faced a rebellion by ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Zubayr, who seized the holy city of Mecca and held most of the Hijaz until his defeat by the Marwanid caliph ʿAbd al-Malik in 691–692. The propagandistic use of coinage and inscriptions by the supporters of Ibn al-Zubayr (the Zubayrids) helped to galvanize the two contending parties into forming distinctive ideological profiles to support their competing claims to leadership of the Islamic state.

In the years following his victory in 691–692, the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik undertook a wide-ranging program of reforms, in an effort to embed the innovations he had begun during the *fitna* and extend them to other branches of his administration. The coinage record from 691 to 699 displays an astonishingly high velocity of change, with the caliphal mint of Damascus playing a central role as a kind of monetary laboratory in which new forms of coinage were tried out and discarded from one year to the next. This short burst of intensive experimentation has been labeled the *adaptive* phase to reflect the transition from the imitative forms of the preceding decades to new forms of coinage which contained inscriptional and formal innovations. The third and final phase has been termed the *epigraphic* phase because it witnessed the abandonment of figured coinage in favor of coins that bore only Arabic inscriptions, a form of coinage that endured as the template for precious metal coinage up to the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century.

This summary of the trajectory of the early coinage, albeit much simplified, gives us some clues as to why the coinage has proved to be such an appealing source of evidence for historians. Coins are found in greater quantities than most other artifacts and are easy to read, though not simple to analyze; the trajectory of the evolution of their design is apparently unidirectional, from static (conservative/imitational), to transformational (adaptive), to innovative (epigraphic). The denouement of the numismatic story is succinct, both visually and chronologically. It involves a complete break with late antique numismatic imagery in favor of a new kind of aniconic coin. The introduction of imageless coins has been interpreted as an event of great significance which links with other facets of ʿAbd al-Malik's reform program and indicates a momentous shift in the ideology of the ruling elite (see, e.g., Blair 1992 and Robinson 2005). In a word, in established scholarship, the coinage record lends itself to a simple and dramatic narrative that begins with the replication of the late antique heritage, followed by a brief convulsive phase of experimentation, and ends with the decisive rejection of late antique practice. What follows is an attempt to investigate the sustainability of this narrative when read against the background to Umayyad identity formation outlined above.

The Conservative Phase (650–691)

The coinage of this phase can helpfully be divided into three groups. The coppers of Greater Syria were struck at several unidentified mints, both official and unofficial. Although they were extremely diverse in terms of the quality of their fabric and design, they retained the basic forms and images of their Byzantine prototypes. Their Christian symbolism has been interpreted by some scholars as an indication of the Christian allegiance of their issuers (Popp 2005) and by others as a sign of the late development of the Islamic presence in Syria (Nevo and Koren 2003): both readings ignore the point that copper coins were issued by local authorities whose aim was to sustain economic exchange by maintaining familiar instruments of exchange. The Muslim elite must have given tacit approval to the circulation of Byzantine-style coppers and probably regarded these coins as having no association with the caliphal state but rather as fulfilling the role of a token coinage issued by local authorities. If they had any concerns about the continued use of Christian symbols on copper coins, there is no sign that they expressed them before the advent of the Marwanids. Even when the anonymous and unattributable coppers of the first phase were gradually replaced during Muʿawiya's reign by a better produced type of copper coin that explicitly named the city of issue, the image of the cross and Byzantine imperial forms continued to appear in their designs (Album and Goodwin 2002: 81–90).

The broad-flan Sasanian drachm was retained as the sole issue of the new Islamic silver mints of Iran and Iraq, with its imperial imagery intact (see Figure 3.1b). Like the Syrian coppers, the Arab-Sasanian silver was a gubernatorial coinage that had no direct relation to the caliphal office. The great majority of issues struck before the civil war bore the name of the issuing governor – the caliph's name and title appeared infrequently, during rare periods of interregnum between governorships, and only in a very few mints (Album and Goodwin 2002: 15). Unlike most Syrian coppers, however, every Arab-Sasanian drachm bore a short caption in Arabic (most commonly *bismillah*, "in the name of God," or a variant thereof) which attested to its Islamic provenance. This phrase planted the seed of an inscriptional program for coins that was to come to fruition in the subsequent epigraphic phase.

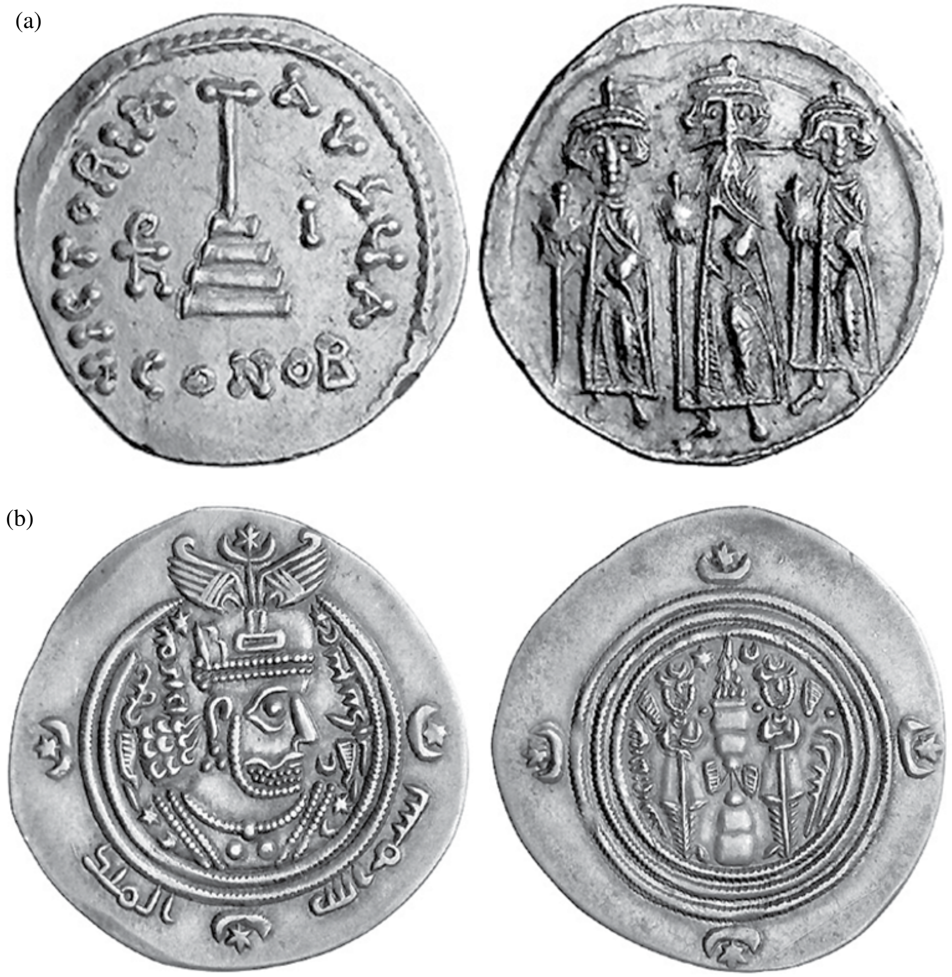

Figure 3.1 (a) Mutilated cross solidus. Source: Album and Goodwin 2002, no. 606.[3] Reproduced with permission of Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; (b) Arab-Sasanian drachm, Bishapur mint, 47 AH. Source: Album and Goodwin 2002, no. 119. Reproduced with permission of Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

The gold coinage, by contrast, presented problems from the beginning. Traditionally a coinage that was directly associated with and struck under the express authority of the ruler, gold solidi represented the ruler's identity in a way that other coins did not. Muʿawiya's attempt to introduce a gold coinage at the beginning of his reign failed precisely because it did not incorporate the traditional numismatic iconography of Byzantium. As a Muslim caliph, Muʿawiya was unable to reproduce on his solidi the symbol of the cross that appeared on contemporary coppers, especially since the particular form of the cross that became standardized during the seventh century – the so-called cross on steps – had become a ubiquitous symbol of both religious allegiance and Byzantine state power. Instead he retained the outline of the form, with its staggered steps and upright trunk, but removed the horizontal bar, thus deforming the symbol in such a way as to make plain his denial of its efficacy, both as a sign of the resurrection and as an emblem of the state (see Figure 3.1a). The *Syriac Chronicle* informs us that the coin was rejected by his (mainly Christian) subjects because it lacked the cross. Muʿawiya was not the only caliph who failed to create a workable gold coinage for these reasons: gold coins of all styles were produced in only tiny quantities before 696–697 (Treadwell 2009: Table Two).

The conservative nature of the early coinage has puzzled many observers who tacitly assume that as the new rulers of the central and eastern territories of the late antique world, the Muslims would have been quick to create distinctive numismatic forms that marked their arrival on the world stage. Some of the reasons why they did not do so have been alluded to above, along with the necessity of considering different categories of coinage individually and separately. But the Sufyanid succession crisis, which gave rise to the Zubayrid challenge to Umayyad power and the ensuing seven-year civil war between 685 and 692, kick-started the Marwanid campaign to define the public face of caliphal rule.

The Civil War and its Aftermath

ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwan lost no time in setting about this task after the fall of the Sufyanids, beginning with Egypt and Syria, the territories which remained under his control. He began to plan the construction of the Dome of the Rock probably no later than two years after the Marwanid victory at Marj Rahit near Damascus in 684 and instituted a series of reforms in the inscriptional formulae which prefaced public documents issued by his chancery, as well as the *tiraz* cloths manufactured in his textile workshops (Treadwell 2012a). Some of these changes seem to have been driven by a determination to establish clearer boundaries between the Muslims and the local Christian communities that had existed under the Sufyanids. His brother ʿAbd al-Aziz, governor of Egypt during the civil war, banned the use of gold and silver crosses and ordered that proclamations be displayed in churches stating that both Muhammad and Jesus were prophets of God but that God was neither born nor did he give birth (Qurʾan 112) (King 1985: 270). A similar statement appeared in the long inscription in the Dome of Rock, suggesting that his campaign to forcibly establish the Marwanid presence in the Near East began with a concerted effort to curtail public expressions of Christian belief in the region while mounting a demonstrative display of Muslim doctrine in its place. Such an assertive policy appears to have aroused the ire of the Byzantine emperor Justinian II and may have contributed towards the tensions which led to the military showdown with the Umayyads at the battle of Sebastopolis in 691–692.

The Zubayrids, the partisans of the counter-caliph Ibn Zubayr, meanwhile proclaimed their right to control the Hijaz and assume the guardianship of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina by virtue of the close relationship that had existed between Ibn Zubayr and the Prophet. Although the textual record tells us nothing about any systematic campaign on the Zubayrids' part, the numismatic evidence shows that the Umayyads' enemies in Iran occasionally inscribed attestations of the Prophetic mission ("Muhammad is the messenger of God") on the silver coins which they issued, thus creating a precedent for the widespread use of religious numismatic inscriptions when the Marwanids resumed the production of precious metal coins after their victory in 691–692 (Heidemann 2010a: 166–169).

The Adaptive Phase (I): The *Shahada* Coinage (691–693)

In 691–692 ʿAbd al-Malik extended the reforms he had begun several years earlier by implementing an ambitious plan to centralize and homogenize the Sufyanid coinage system and adapt it for use throughout the reunited Marwanid caliphate. At least this seems to be the explanation for the greatly expanded role of the mint(s) in the capital, Damascus, which produced coins of all three metals from this year. The plan appears to have started in a fairly chaotic fashion, certainly as far as the silver was concerned: at least four different types of Arab-Sasanian silver coin were minted in the first year, probably under the guidance of mint workers imported from southern Iraq, while in the two following years, inconsistencies continued to appear in their inscriptions (Ilisch 2007: 17–18) (see Figure 3.2b). The Damascus copper coinage appears to have been rather loosely controlled as well, though it is impossible to be sure which copper issues are precisely datable to ʿAbd al-Malik's reign (Album and Goodwin 2002: 99–107). But the precious metal coins of this and subsequent phases shared a common feature: a single Arabic inscription, containing the testimony of faith, or *shahada*. As for the gold coinage, a minor cosmetic change was made to the mutilated cross motif in this phase (the so-called *shahada* solidus). This involved the transformation of the short horizontal bar at the top of the structure (see Figure 3.1a) into a small globe which resembled the globes on the staffs held by the standing figures (see Figure 3.2a). Many scholars have argued that this was intended to reflect a change in the meaning conveyed by the mutilated cross. The altered form is known in numismatic terminology as the "pole on steps" and has been variously interpreted as a depiction of a victory symbol in the form of an upright spear, as the Prophet's staff, or as an urban column, among other ideas (Heidemann 2010b). However, no explanation has been offered as to why and how a familiar form could have been invested with an entirely new meaning by virtue of such a minor change: nor why the caliph's advisors would have chosen to make such a significant alteration to one side of the coin while retaining the three standing figures on the other side. All these interpretations assume that it was the "pole on steps" alone, of all the

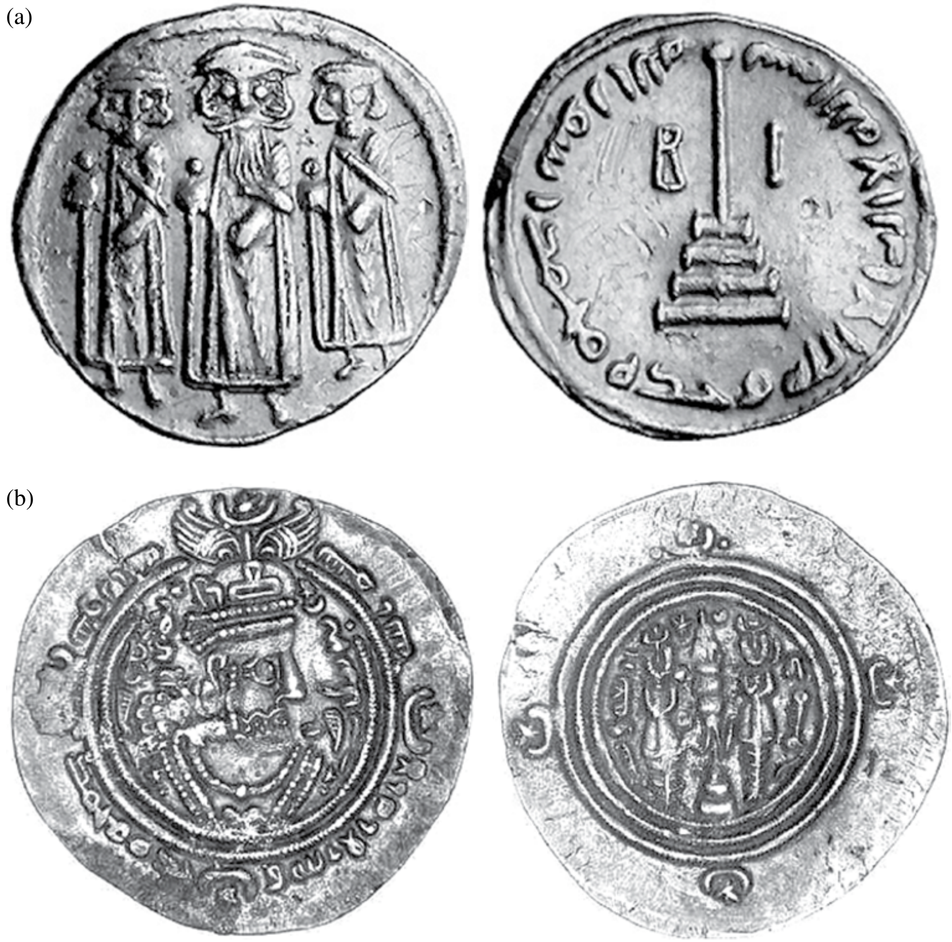

FIGURE 3.2 (a) *Shahada* solidus. Source: Album and Goodwin 2002, no. 607. Reproduced with permission of Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; (b) Arab-Sasanian drachm, Damascus, 74/693–694 (Balog 1950). Source: Morton and Eden 2012, lot 22.

images used on the coins of this phase, which was invested with new meaning. But the lack of corroborating evidence and the wide variety of interpretative schemes proposed strains each of these hypotheses to breaking point. It is more logical to assume that the only significant change imposed in the first phase of the caliph's coinage reforms was the addition of the new inscription, which remained on all precious metal coins issued in mints controlled by the caliph from this time forwards. The same phrase occurs in multiple locations on the Dome of the Rock, which was completed in the same year that the first adaptive coins were struck in Damascus in 691–692.

The *shahada* was an immensely significant choice of text. This phrase, which was composed of Qurʾanic materials, though not a direct citation from the sacred text, was the portal through which all Muslims addressed their God and by which non-Muslims could seek conversion to Islam. Although we do not know the exact form of words that constituted the *salat* (ritual prayer), it is most likely that the *shahada* formed the introduction to the *salat* then as now. As the first of the Pillars of Islam (*arkan al-islam*), it embodied the egalitarian nature of the new religion. It was uttered on a daily basis by caliph and commoner alike and plainly laid out the two primary elements of the faith: the unicity of God and the prophetic mission of Muhammad. The *shahada* was a spoken testimony of faith which bridged the gap between ruler and ruled, gave voice to the object on which it was placed, and supplied a direct link between that object and the most important and distinctive communal activity undertaken by Muslims. The formal role of the numismatic *shahada* in this early period was absolutely distinct from that of the imagery that graced the coins of the Muslims' predecessors. While it provided an auditory connection between the coin and communal worship, it lacked the symbolic weight of earlier representations of imperial and religious authority (*pace* Heidemann 2010a: 170–174).

The Adaptive Phase (II): The Caliphal Image Coinage (693–696)

In this period ʿAbd al-Malik abandoned the anonymized coinage of the previous half-century in favor of a regnal coinage that bore an image of the caliph himself. It is not clear why he decided to do so at this time, nor what effect the momentous changes in the contemporary gold coinage of Constantinople may have had on his decision (Grierson 1968: 568–570). We can be sure, however, that one reason for introducing this image was to produce a numismatic type that could be used on the coinage of all three metals. This in turn suggests that he was searching for a form of coinage that would circulate throughout all regions of the Umayyad state, including Iraq and Iran as well as Greater Syria. Seen in this light, the caliphal image phase was a logical development of the first adaptive phase in which three different types had been applied to the three metals coined in Damascus. The problem with the caliphal image experiment was that, while it succeeded in imprinting the caliphal presence clearly upon the gold and copper issues of Syria, it failed to resolve the problem of the Sasanian imperial bust which continued to be seen on silver coinage.

The caliphal image gold coinage (known widely as the standing caliph solidus) bore the image of the caliph wearing a patterned robe, holding the hilt of a large sheathed sword, with a knotted cord hanging from his waist (see Figure 3.3a). The precise meaning of these items of caliphal regalia is lost to us, but there can be little doubt that they allude to familiar items of caliphal costume and its appurtenances. The reverse of the solidus retains the image of the mutilated

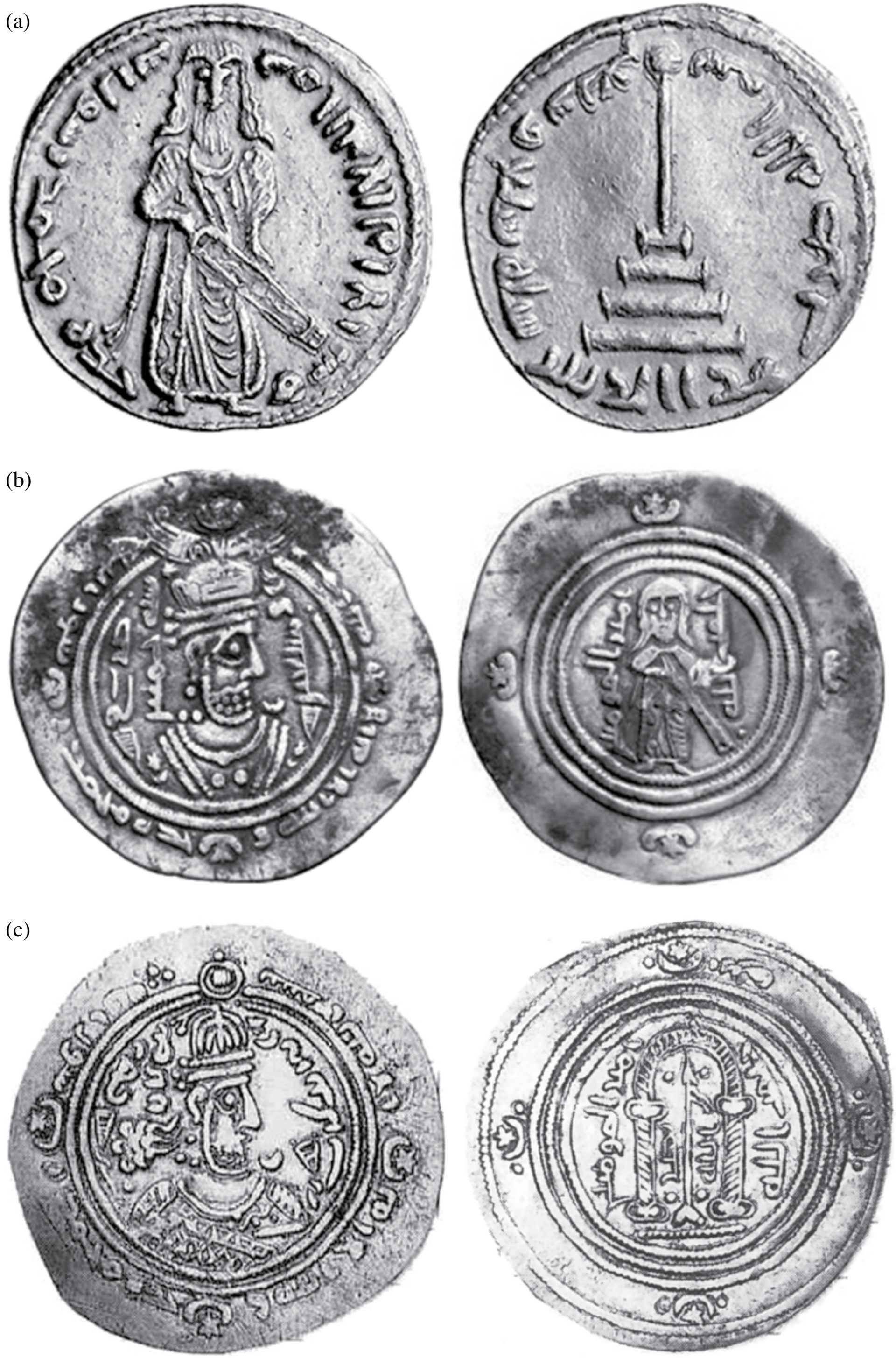

Figure 3.3 (a) Caliphal image solidus. Source: Album and Goodwin 2002, no. 705. Reproduced with permission of Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; (b) Caliphal image drachm 1. Source: Gorny and Mosch 2006, lot 4909; (c) Caliphal image drachm 2 (“Mihrab and ʿAnaza” drachm). Source: Treadwell 2005. Reproduced with permission.

cross on steps of the *shahada* solidus but with the addition of an Arabic phrase in the margin giving the denomination (*dinar*) and date of issue. The same image was also placed upon the copper issues of the caliphal image phase that were struck in 16 or more different mints throughout Greater Syria. But on the copper coins the mutilated cross acquired an ellipsis whose function was most likely to create a distinctive denominational mark which would prevent the fraudulent practice of plating the new and unfamiliar copper issues with gold in an attempt to pass them off as solidi. The theory that the pole and ellipsis represent the status of the caliph as the axis (*qutb*) of his community around which his subjects perform circumambulation is suggestive and intriguing (Jamil 1999), but it does not account for the absence of the ellipsis from the gold standing caliph issue. This is where such a symbol would have been placed, had it borne the weight of meaning ascribed to it in this hypothesis.

Although it is possible that a simplified version of the standing caliphal figure had already been struck in the mint of Jerusalem before its introduction in Damascus (Album and Goodwin 2002: 98), there is no evidence that the caliphal image type formed part of an emergent caliphal iconography that became visible in other media during the Umayyad period. The stucco sculptures of “ruling figures” from the Umayyad palaces of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi and Khirbat al-Mafjar bear little formal resemblance to the numismatic image and are more likely generic figures of authority rather than specific references to the caliph and his office (for images see Ettinghausen and Grabar 1987, figs. 49 and 51). While the numismatic form may have given rise to copies in other media than coinage, specifically the pilgrim vessels associated with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, these were not state-sanctioned objects but rather cheap, popular mementoes designed as keepsakes (Raby 1999). Neither is it likely that ʿAbd al-Malik, in spite of his recent military triumphs, would have jeopardized the still fragile loyalty of the newly reincorporated territories of the Mashriq (eastern territories of Islam) and the Hijaz by encouraging an imperial cult on the Byzantine model. Such an action would not only have run counter to the Sufyanid precedent but would also have exposed ʿAbd al-Malik to the charge of acting like a king. In this connection, it is notable that the standing figure either wears a head covering and/or has shoulder-length hair but does not wear a crown.

The assumption that the caliphal image was a type that was designed solely for application in a numismatic context helps to explain the tentative nature of the attempts that were made to introduce the image onto the silver coinage. Had the caliphal image already become widely recognized, one might imagine that it could have replaced that of the Sasanian Shahanshah (King of Kings) at one stroke, while the fire altar could have been substituted by the image of the mutilated cross. But this solution was not attempted: instead two discrete, partial adjustments were made to the Sasanian drachm in successive issues, both of which did away with the fire altar but retained the form of the Sasanian bust. The first involved the replacement of the fire altar by a rather cramped image of the standing caliph (see Figure 3.3b). Here the two ruling figures were juxtaposed, to the distinct disadvantage of the caliph, who appears constrained and hesitant by contrast with the large confident bust of his rival. The second type involved the conflation of a simplified version of the Sasanian bust, which lacks the characteristic winged crown but has acquired new regalia that designate the caliphal presence, including, most significantly, a diminutive version of the sword worn by the standing caliph of the contemporary gold coinage (Treadwell 2005: 11 and see Figure 3.3c).

This second silver coin (the so-called Mihrab and ʿAnaza type) presented the opportunity to fill the space vacated by the redundant fire altar with an image representing the religion of Islam. The composite image devised for this space was arresting both for the complexity of its design and its inscriptional content. The sacrum encloses a standing weapon, which is most likely a spear on a stand, that is identified by the accompanying caption (*nasr allah*, "victory of God") as an emblem of the divine assistance that ensured the Muslim triumph over their enemies. The clear inference suggested by the form of the sacrum is that the object which a seventh-century Syrian might expect to see within it – the Christian cross – has been dislodged and replaced by an emblem signifying the Muslim appropriation of this sacred space (perhaps a reference to the Dome of the Rock itself). This image could be described as the first tentative endeavor to construct a symbol on the coinage that served as a positive reference to the religion of Islam. In so doing, the designer may also have been trying to devise a denominational sign for the silver caliphal image issue, in order to contrast it with the denominational marks found on contemporary gold and copper coins. But the experiment was discontinued before large quantities of this type were struck, perhaps because the complexity of its imagery was judged to be too great to ensure the coin's acceptance in the market. The apparent failure of these two types was followed immediately by the introduction of the aniconic epigraphic coinage.

The Epigraphic Phase (696–)

The introduction of epigraphic coinage in all three metals in 696–699 can be seen as a wholesale rejection of the late antique numismatic heritage. Carried out quickly, with a massive issue of the new types in the first three years, and a simultaneous withdrawal from circulation of Byzantine gold solidi, the new coins were quite unlike any precious metal coinage that had ever been struck. The inscriptions that had marked Marwanid coinage from the beginning of the adaptive phase were extended: the *shahada* took center stage in the obverse field while new Qurʾanic verses which expanded upon the unicity of God (Qurʾan 112) and the Prophetic mission (Qurʾan 9:33) were also included (see Figure 3.4). The extract from Qurʾan 112 ("He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one")

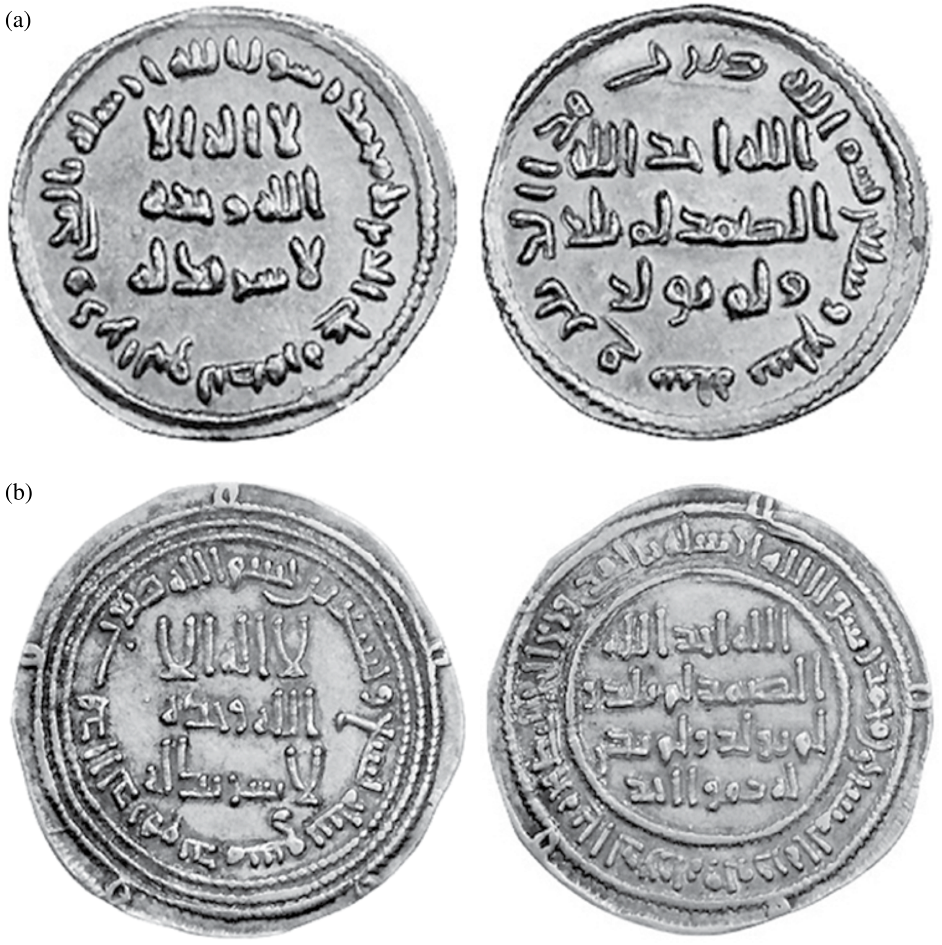

FIGURE 3.4 (a) Early epigraphic *dinar*, no mint 77/696–697. Source: Nicol 2009, no. 1. Reproduced with permission of Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; (b) Epigraphic dirham, Damascus 99/717–718). Source: Nicol 2009, no. 641). Reproduced with permission of Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

was placed in the reverse field, where it conveyed in words the message that had previously been projected by the mutilated cross. ʿAbd al-Malik faced protest from the scholarly class, who worried about the inappropriate exposure of the sacred text, but he persisted with his reform and succeeded in imposing a coinage series whose basic form was to endure for 500 years (Bacharach 2010; Treadwell 2012b).

Although this series of radical and rapidly executed changes can be seen as the culmination of the growing dominance of religious inscriptions on the transitional coinage, we should not assume that the epigraphic coinage was intended as the final stage of the reform process from the beginning. As we have seen, the caliphal image phase had encountered an insoluble dilemma when trying to assimilate the two iconographic traditions of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires. The epigraphic phase may have been implemented as a rapid response to the impasse presented by the development of the figural program. The removal of the caliphal name and titles from the new coinage has been interpreted in the past as a masterful tactic in a strategy of caliphal self-effacement. The new coins were presented as suitable instruments of exchange in a theocratic state in which ultimate authority resided in the divinity, rather than his earthly agents (Treadwell 2009: 379). However, by veiling his presence in this way, the caliph also conceded the loss of the public visibility that his imperial predecessors had enjoyed and reduced his ability to control the coinage (Johns 2003: 433). We cannot know for certain why the caliphal presence was withdrawn in this way. It has been assumed, in light of the success and longevity of this new style of coinage, that the caliph acted deliberately, with an eye to gaining a strategic advantage. But it is also possible that he removed himself from the new coins because he anticipated the scholarly protest that the coins aroused and did not wish to give his critics further grounds to attack him on the charge of mistreating the sacred text.

In a similar vein, it should be borne in mind that the reform, however spectacular a change it finally proved to be, was in its initial stages more successful in some respects than others. The gold issue, being by far the smallest and easiest to control, was a resounding success: Byzantine gold disappeared from circulation immediately, no doubt as a result of its withdrawal, followed by its melting for bullion and restriking in the form of epigraphic *dinar*s. The epigraphic dirham, although struck in huge quantities from the early years, was never the sole Umayyad silver denomination. In the central silver-producing region of southern Iran, some mints continued to produce Sasanian-style drachms until the middle of the first decade of the eighth century, while on the eastern fringes of Iran, Sasanian-style drachms continued to be produced well into the Abbasid period and circulated alongside genuine Sasanian drachms (Ilisch 2008). As for the copper coinage, the uniform epigraphic copper coinage survived for only just over a decade before local issues bearing emblems and inscriptions that were particular to the mints which issued them were introduced once again.

Coinage and Identity

The argument has been made above that changes in the design of early Islamic coinage reflected the Umayyads' attempts to establish a suitable identity for their ruling institution and the religion from which it derived legitimacy. During the caliphal image phase, a brief attempt was made to devise a figured iconography which was appropriate for an Umayyad caliphal coinage. The standing caliph image endeavored to "Islamicize" that of the Byzantine standing emperor and succeeded well enough: there could have been few coin users who were unaware of the identity of the sword-bearing figure, though some modern commentators have boldly speculated that the standing figure represented the Prophet rather than the Marwanid caliph (e.g., Hoyland 2007: 594–595). But the project to devise an indigenous numismatic imagery foundered. The new aniconic coinage reverted to the anonymized format of the years before 693. It emphasized the primacy of communal religious practice and obliterated all reference to the caliph and his office.

The effects of the aniconic coinage on the visual culture of Islam must have been considerable. The precious metal coinage of the eighth century relayed the dual message that the caliphs disapproved of representation on objects manufactured by the state and sanctioned the use of holy scripture in the place of figured imagery. In a late antique setting where the status of publicly sanctioned figured images was highly contended, this radical departure established a clear precedent for the future.

Were the attitudes expressed in the coinage reflective of other developments in the visual culture of the Umayyad period? Although the programmatic nature of ʿAbd al-Malik's reforms has been somewhat overplayed in recent scholarship (see Blair 1992), it may be useful to venture a comparison between the coinage and another more complex element of ʿAbd al-Malik's reform program. The Dome of the Rock has been minutely analyzed in all of its aspects (decoration, form, topography) with the goal of uncovering the circumstances of its construction and its function as a religious monument. It has often been noted that it drew heavily on Byzantine models for both its octagonal form and its mosaic program. But attempts to unlock the secrets of the building's meaning and function have yielded few persuasive conclusions, even though its origins in the contested arenas of the Zubayrid civil war and multifaith Jerusalem have been helpfully clarified. The iconography of the mosaics is allusive and nonspecific – references to the display of trophies taken from conquered enemies have been detected in the palmetted crown shapes, while the luxuriant trees and burgeoning plants erupting from jeweled vessels have been read as references to Solomon's temple and the heavenly paradise that awaits true believers. While it is reasonable to deduce such inferences from these details, the indeterminate and unfocused nature of the overall decorative design is remarkable.

What is incontestable is that the building delivered an overwhelming sense of the divine presence which lay immanent and undefined within it. The perfume of the anointed Rock, the deep color palette of the mosaics (gold, green, blue), and the strikingly unworldly hybrid vegetal forms that covered its walls would have served to unsettle the visitor by removing fixed points of perspective and overwhelming the olfactory and visual senses. This was, in short, a "God-filled" interior, which filled the worshipper with the numinous presence of the divinity that animated the holy space. The only explanatory text, the narrow inscription that circled the octagonal arcade, was hidden unobtrusively, high up towards the ceiling. The cumulative effect of the space and its decorative program was quite different from that of Byzantine holy places, with their iconographic programs of imperial and religious origin, their carefully structured rituals, and clearly signed routes of circulation.

In similar manner, the epigraphic coins were nothing if not "God-filled" objects, which confounded earlier expectations of monetary forms. The phrase giving the mundane data of place and date of minting was preceded by the *bismillah*: God's presence was emphasized by references to the work of His Prophet (who would make God's religion prevail over all others in the world) and to His unicity. Both the Dome of the Rock and ʿAbd al-Malik's innovative coinage signaled an inversion of the late antique imperial state's prioritization of imperial over religious identity. The identity of the new state was characterized by an insistent reference to the authority of the new religion and the marked attenuation of the ruler's presence, an adjustment which was to have profound consequences on Islamic visual culture in later centuries.

Notes

1 For a recent overview of the ongoing debate about the extent to which Umayyad art should be considered late antique or innovative see Flood 2012.

2 The following sections deal in abbreviated form with the numismatic evidence for the development of early Islamic coinage in the central and eastern Islamic lands. Detailed studies, some of which also address the contemporary coinage of Egypt, North Africa, and the Maghrib, can be found in Album and Goodwin 2002; Heidemann 2010a; and Treadwell 2009.

3 All coin images are shown at the same size irrespective of the size of the coin.

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4

The Qurʾan, Calligraphy, and the Early Civilization of Islam

Alain George

The growth of Arabic calligraphy was a far-reaching development in early Islamic civilization. The earliest extant manuscripts of the Qurʾan can be broadly ascribed to the first century of Islam (seventh to early eighth century CE). In the Umayyad period, the tradition they represent was giving way to geometrically codified "Kufic" scripts that continued to flourish and diversify under the Abbasids before eventually being superseded by new angular and cursive trends in the tenth century. While this evolution was initially prompted by the need to preserve the Qurʾanic text, it quickly prompted the creation of a fully fledged art form that radically transformed the heritage of late antique scribal traditions. That process can be analyzed at two main levels: textual, with a gradual move to fill in the gaps originally left by the written form of the sacred text; and aesthetic, as a visual symbol of Islam.

The Arabic Script before Islam

Before Islam, the Arabs had a predominantly oral culture. Their main art form was poetry, an immaterial heritage deposited, as the Arabic language puts it, "in the breasts of men" (*fi sudur al-nas*). The written language was used for secondary purposes: among thousands of pre-Islamic inscriptions discovered in the Arabian desert, many are short invocations of the gods, or simple declarations about everyday life probably carved as a pastime by travelers and nomadic pastoralists. As far as writing with pen and ink is concerned, a huge time gap separates the latest extant

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papyri written in Nabataean, the Aramaic script of Petra in northwestern Arabia (second century), from their distant offshoots, the earliest Arabic documents, which date to the first decades of Islam (seventh century). Nevertheless, several elements of content and context make it likely that Arabic portable documents were written in the intervening period for correspondence, contracts, and other utilitarian purposes (George 2010: 24–25; MacDonald 2010: 21; Stein 2010: 264–267). Papyrus presumably continued to be used, in which case it may have needed to be imported from across the Red Sea. Archaeological finds in the Yemen have only yielded more makeshift writing materials, such as palm stalks, ceramic fragments, and bones: being readily available and economical, they are likely to have also been employed in the neighboring Hijaz, the cradle of Islam. Indeed, several of them are mentioned in later Arabic accounts of the primitive notation of the Qurʾan (Stein 2010: 257–263).

In antiquity, Old Arabic, the linguistic ancestor of Qurʾanic Arabic, had been written by borrowing the alphabet of adjoining regions, such as South Arabian near the Yemen and the native Ancient North Arabian scripts in the Hijaz (MacDonald 2010: 17). These were all derivatives of the South Semitic alphabet, which only survives today in the form of the Ethiopic syllabary. At an early date, the Nabataean script also began to spread in the northwest of the Arabian Peninsula. By the fourth century, it had eclipsed all other scripts in that region, where it underwent an evolution that gave rise to the script we know as "Arabic." In this process, several Nabataean letter shapes were progressively transformed, and the ligatures that joined the letters were moved from the top to the bottom of the writing line. Paradoxically, the extinct Ancient North Arabian scripts had been better suited to record the full range of sounds in the Arabic language (MacDonald 2010: 22). Being an Aramaic alphabet, Nabataean only offered some 16 letter shapes to record the 28 phonemes of Arabic (29 if one counts the glottal stop, *hamza*). This deficiency was innately more acute for longer texts or texts not known by memory or convention, as would become apparent in the early years of Islam.

The Nabataean origin of the Arabic script has only been decisively established in recent years thanks to the discovery of a growing number of transitional late Nabataean inscriptions, especially in Saudi Arabia (Hoyland 2008: 60–63; Nehmé 2010). For much of the twentieth century, a strand in scholarship had instead posited a Syriac origin of the script. Syriac, the written form of the Aramaic dialect of Edessa, was a major language of liturgy, literature, and culture in the first millennium. It was particularly associated with the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Church of the East, two native churches of the Middle East respectively called "Jacobite" and "Nestorian" by their detractors. In the sixth century, their missionary activities extended to Yemen, East Arabia, India, and Central Asia. Closer to their homelands, they also worked to convert Arabs of the desert areas between Syria and Iraq. In seeking to reach out to these constituencies, they appear to have used the Arabic script, even though they had not invented it.

Only three dated pre-Islamic inscriptions in the fully formed "Arabic" script have been discovered to date, and in different ways they reflect this context (George 2010: 22–24; Hoyland 2008: 53–60; Robin 2006: 327–338). All of them are from Greater Syria: the inscriptions of Zabad (512 CE) and Harran (568 CE) originally belonged to churches; the graffito from Jabal Usays (529 CE) was carved by an envoy of the Ghassanid king al-Harith ibn Jabala (r. 529–569), an Arab Christian ally of Byzantium. A visual contrast with the latest dated Nabataean transitional texts is apparent: the ligatures have become straight, while the tall strokes are parallel to one another and slanting to the right. These essentially aesthetic transformations convey an unprecedented sense of regularity to the script. They were probably introduced under the influence of Syriac, and eventually made their way into the earliest Qurʾanic scripts.

The First Seven Decades of Islam

The coming of Islam in the seventh century marked a shift away from this slow, incremental process to a phase of rapid, conscious change for the Arabic script. In a matter of decades, the Arabs laid the cornerstones of an accomplished tradition of calligraphy, and of a civilization in which the written and spoken word would become inextricably interwoven. This profound transformation was initially triggered by the need to record the Qurʾan, and perhaps also by the logistics of conquest, which required the reliable communication of information across vast distances. In broader terms, this development was inscribed in the landscape of a region, the Middle East, already saturated with the sacred buildings, objects, and sites of older religions, foremost among them Christianity. Surging from the remote fringes of the civilized world, the first Muslims sought to proclaim a faith that their new subjects sometimes perceived as a heterodox monotheistic current. One must imagine the new rulers of the land first reaching the foot of major monuments in Syria, Iraq, or Iran, such as the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the great cathedral of Edessa, or the palace complex of the Sasanian emperors at Ctesiphon, the great vault of which still stands today. How to impress upon local populations – in their vast majority, Christians – the sense of a true and lasting faith? One element of the answer was the development of Arabic calligraphy and its display in the public sphere.

The earliest dated Islamic texts are two utilitarian papyri both written in 22 AH (642–643 CE); and a rock inscription carved two years later in the region of Hegra, between Medina and Petra, which reads, "I, Zuhayr, wrote at the time of the death of 'Umar in the year 24" – possibly a direct reference to the assassination of the caliph ʿUmar at the very end of 23 AH (November 644) (George 2010: 28–29; Ghabban 2008). These texts belong to a broader corpus of early dated rock inscriptions, mainly invocatory, and utilitarian papyri. Their media and functions suggest a continuity with the pre-Islamic past, but there are also noticeable differences:

diacritical dots and dashes now distinguish sounds noted by the same letter form, in response to the shortcoming of the Nabataean script outlined above; the short final letter *taʾ* is increasingly noted like a final *haʾ*, which facilitates the distinction between grammatical cases; and the letter *alif* is frequently inserted in the middle of words to record the long sound "a" (George 2010: 29–31; Robin 2006: 343–347). These innovations all contribute to reduce the ambiguities of the written language and thereby enable the script to accurately convey information with less reliance on oral transmission. This has led Robin and Hoyland to argue that they were introduced in the early years of the caliphate when, in addition to the issue of recording the Qurʾan, the political leaders of the Islamic community needed to correspond with troops at distant ends of their nascent empire (Hoyland 2006: 403; Robin 2006: 350–351). However, elements of context make it equally possible that, in terms of script, several of the above features already existed in the sixth century (George 2010: 51–52; MacDonald 2010: 21). Given the sparse nature of the evidence, it is ultimately difficult to determine whether the above orthographic reforms took place before or shortly after the rise of Islam.

The earliest Qurʾanic scripts have been called "Hijazi" in modern scholarship, based on the following description in the *Fihrist* (Index of Books) of the Baghdadi bibliographer al-Nadim, written in 987:

> The first Arabic scripts were the Meccan and after that the Madinan, then the Basran, then the Kufan. As regards the Meccan and Madinan, there is in its [*sic*] *alif*s a bend to the right hand side and an elevation of the vertical strokes; and in its form, there is a slight inclination. (George 2010: 31; cf.; Déroche 2009: 109–117)

The mention of inclined letters makes the reference to this primitive corpus unambiguous. But how widespread were the denominations "Meccan" and "Madinan" in al-Nadim's lifetime, and how long had they been in existence by then? Were they meant to encompass all of the earliest Qurʾanic scripts, or specific tendencies within them? Al-Nadim does not elaborate on the subject or cite his sources. The modern conflation of these names as "Hijazi" should therefore be regarded as a convenient shorthand for manuscripts that might in fact have been produced beyond the Hijaz, the region in western Arabia from which Islam arose.

Hijazi Qurʾans are of central importance to the history of the Qurʾanic text. The date of this small corpus has been debated for much of the twentieth century, when proponents of a "revisionist" strand in Qurʾan scholarship argued that the sacred text was not committed to writing in its present form until the late seventh century or even, according to Wansbrough's extreme hypothesis, the Abbasid period (for an overview, see Sinai and Neuwirth 2011: 1–11). Paradoxically, it was only decades after the onset of these debates that detailed palaeographic studies of the manuscripts themselves were undertaken. These have converged to place the bulk of the Hijazi corpus in the first century of the *hijra* (the seventh to early eighth centuries CE). To briefly outline some of the main criteria behind these attributions:

1. The script of some Hijazi Qurʾans finds close parallels in dated papyri and inscriptions of the seventh century (Déroche 2002: 622, 627; George 2010: 32; Grohmann 1958: esp. 221–222); the script of an archaic Hijazi fragment preserved in a palimpsest at Cambridge even displays affinities with fifth-century transitional Nabataean inscriptions (George 2011: 400–403).
2. A group of large-format early Qurʾans has been securely identified as Umayyad commissions of the late seventh to mid-eighth century; the earliest of these have transitory features between Hijazi and Kufic, and probably date to the reign of the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705); the rest are in fully formed Kufic; these elements imply that Hijazi was already being superseded by the end of the seventh century and therefore existed at an earlier date (Déroche 2002: 629–641; 2004a; 2014: chapters 3–4; George 2010: 74–93).
3. The orthography, particularly the notation of medial *alif*, is less developed in Hijazi manuscripts than in these early Kufic Qurʾans, which suggests a broad process of orthographic amplification through time, albeit not strictly linear (Déroche 2009: 51–75, 130–135; 2014; Small 2011); this evolution is consistent with the above hypotheses.
4. The radiocarbon dating of a famous Hijazi palimpsest discovered in Sanaa has yielded a 99.2 percent probability that its parchment is older than 675 CE, although another test done on the same manuscript has also yielded a pre-Islamic date range (Déroche 2014: 49, 54; Sadeghi and Bergmann 2010: 353); this points to the fact that radiocarbon analyses ought to be consistently interpreted with caution, at a time when they are becoming increasingly available (Déroche 2014: 1–13, 125, 128; George 2009: 86–88).

The manuscript evidence, in sum, confirms the existence of the Qurʾan as a written text in the early decades of the *hijra*, before the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik, albeit with incomplete orthography and a sparse notation of diacritical marks. To date, of all known Hijazi fragments, only the lower text of the Sanaa palimpsest (Figure 4.1) has revealed substantial noncanonical variants (Déroche 2014: 530–531, 1–53; Sadeghi and Goudarzi 2012). A few more limited variants, some of which may be scribal errors, have also come to light in other manuscripts (Déroche 2009: 105–108, 144–145; 2014: 30–31, 46–47; George 2011: 404–405). Much remains to be learned from the textual study of this corpus.

Beyond issues of content, the materiality of Hijazi Qurʾans makes them exceptional witnesses of the history of the first decades of Islam – a crucial period for which direct evidence of any kind is rare. Their most striking feature is lack of scribal uniformity. Hijazi scripts are akin to individual handwriting, in contrast with the highly codified calligraphy of later times. This can be most clearly observed in manuscripts written by several different hands, such as the codex "Parisino-Petropolitanus," which had five scribes and as many writing styles (Déroche 2009: 21–45, 127–130; 2014: 19–20, 64–66). In conditions where Arabic literacy was still limited, such collaborations may have been

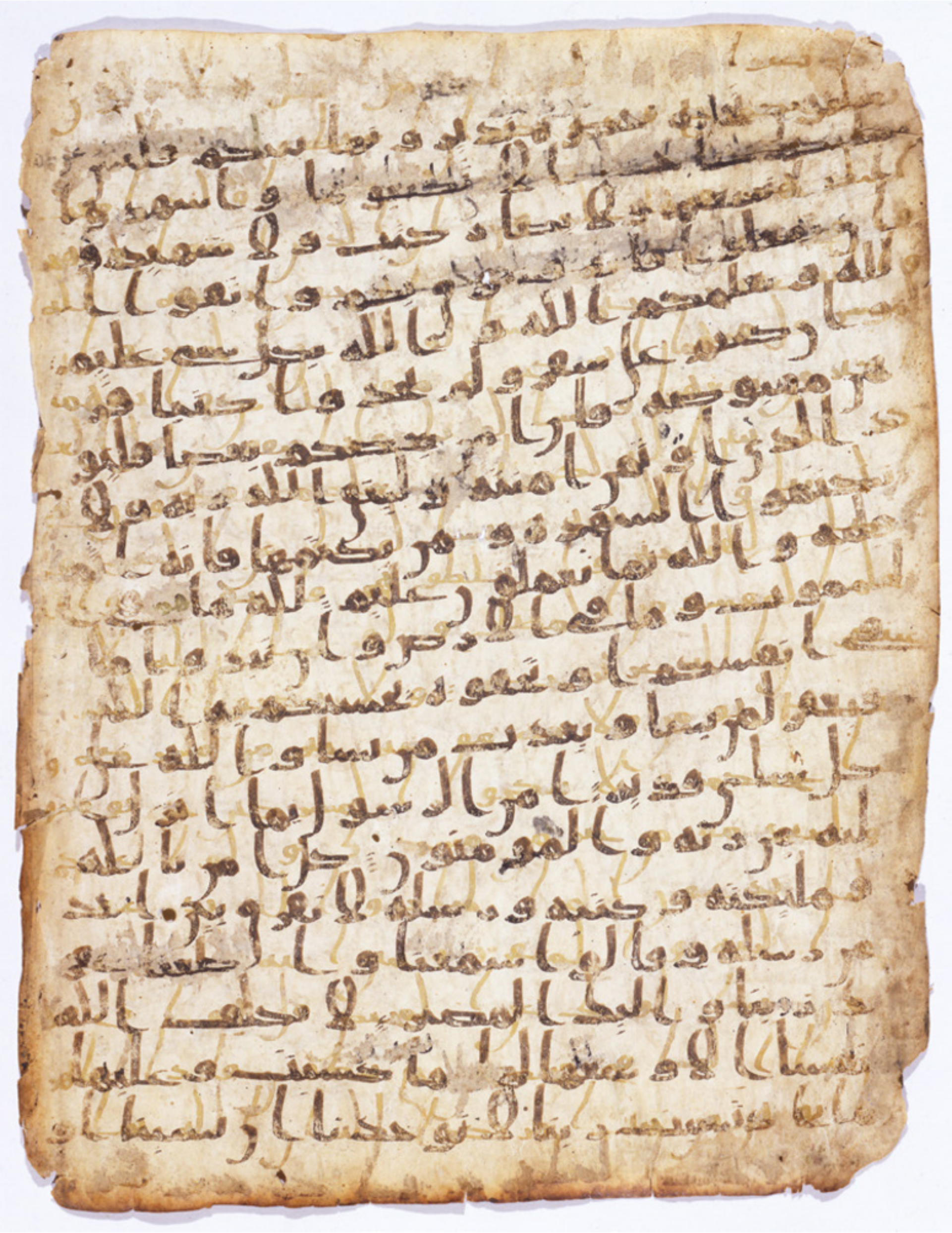

FIGURE 4.1 Qurʾanic palimpsest in Hijazi script (unknown provenance, seventh century). Source: Copenhagen, The David Collection, inv. 86/2003, 36.6 × 28.2 cm. Reproduced with permission.

necessary in order to produce new copies of the Qurʾan in the shortest possible time, as hypothesized by Déroche.

The variability observed in Hijazi scripts finds an echo in more subtle aspects of the book as object. For example, parchment, the writing material of all Qurʾans until the tenth century, was prepared and ruled in different ways among extant Hijazi manuscripts: the procedure followed in some suggests an affinity with Greek and Coptic bibles, which are mutually related in technique; and in others, with Syriac bibles. The comparative study of a dozen Hijazi Qurʾans along these lines has shown that other features, such as ruling grids, quire composition, and *sura* (chapter) decorations, consistently lead back to either of these broad scribal traditions (George 2010: 40–49). In other words, when faced with the need to copy the Qurʾan, the earliest Islamic scribes appear to have drawn practical knowledge from the world of biblical manuscripts.

How did this happen? Muslims might simply have learned techniques from Syriac or Greek scribes, whether openly or more discretely, in recently conquered cities. In the seventh century, the first congregational mosques in Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo, for example, were built in the precincts of Christian ecclesiastical complexes (see Guidetti, CHAPTER 5). Some of these centers of Christian life and learning probably housed scribes and scriptoria. In a contiguous realm, Christians such as the father of Saint John Damascene are known to have worked for the Muslim administration, although these particular scribes would have been trained to produce official documents on papyrus, rather than bound parchment codices. Closer to the ecclesiastical milieu, a chronicle of the capture of Jerusalem in 638 relates the case of an archdeacon who put his skill as a marble worker at the service of Muslims:

> The atheistic Saracens entered the Holy city of Christ our God, Jerusalem, in punishment for our negligence, which is innumerable, and immediately, they arrived running at the place called Capitol. They took with them men, some by force, others by their own will in order to clean this place and build this damned thing destined for their prayer which they call mosque (*midzghita*). Among these men was John, archdeacon of Saint Theodore the Martyr because he was, by profession, a marble worker. He let himself be seduced by them for a dishonest gain, and went to work there by his own assent. He was a very able craftsman. (Author's translation, after Flusin 1992: 21)

A similar process may have been repeated in the field of book production, with Muslims seeking the collaboration of biblical scribes, many of whom belonged to the lower ranks of the clergy or were simply laymen. While some of these scribes may arguably have been early converts from Christianity, early Islamic sources mention Christians who copied the Qurʾan for pay at the request of Muslims in Hira, a city at the southern edge of Iraq with a predominantly Arab population (George 2010: 52–53; 2011: 425–426). These different scenarios evoke a period of relatively loose dogmatic boundaries.

As finished objects, Hijazi manuscripts were still inscribed in the visual landscape of late antiquity. Their vertical pages typically carrying over 20 lines of script have an immediate resonance with bibles of the period (George 2010: 40–44). They were consistently written in one column, whereas bibles could often have two or three. This, together with their slanting letters and relatively large total size, gave a basic unity to an otherwise heterogeneous tradition. This simple but effective visual concept may arguably hark back to a common archetype, a manuscript or set of manuscripts that would have been imitated out of reverence (Déroche 2014: 63–64, 72; George 2010: 51–52).

The Umayyad Period and the Codification of Arabic Scripts (*c.* 690–750)

The reign of the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik saw the consolidation of Muslim central administration and is generally regarded as a major stage in the establishment of the Islamic state. In the field of documentary bookhands, it was marked by the adoption of Arabic as the official language, whereas Greek and Persian had hitherto also retained wide currency, a phenomenon hitherto accompanied by the continued employment of non-Muslim scribes in Muslim chanceries. But this was also a turning point in the history of Qurʾanic calligraphy, the beginning of a new era that, in some ways, continues to this day. The earliest dated witness of this transformation lies inside the Dome of the Rock, a monument built in 692 on Temple Mount, in Jerusalem, the site of Herod's temple, destroyed by Roman armies in 70 CE and left as a bare field of ruins under the early Christian empire, as if to signify the historical defeat of the Jews. The Dome of the Rock thus symbolically inscribed Islam within a long and conflictual sacred history, in a locus of singular emotional charge (Grabar 2006: 19–58). Its mosaic inscriptions, which run above the spandrels of the inner octagon, were executed in gold mosaic over a dark green ground, a color scheme replicated with a dark blue ground in the copper plaques that once stood above its entrances.

The text is a compilation of Qurʾanic and non-Qurʾanic passages about God, the divine revelation, Jesus, and Muhammad, with strong anti-Trinitarian overtones. At the level of script, a stark contrast with Hijazi is immediately apparent (see George 2010: 62–66; for an image, see Guidetti, CHAPTER 5). The tall strokes are now vertical, rather than slanting, and the letters have become more geometrical, with a tendency to reduce all shapes to straight lines and circles. They are articulated upon horizontal gridlines that ensure the coherence of the whole composition, and would originally have facilitated its realization with rows of tesserae. Through these features, a new conception of the script emerges. The inscriptions appear to have been executed by several teams of mosaicists trained in the Byzantine tradition, alongside Arabic scribes who must have painted an underdrawing of the text on the fresh plaster. One can envision them working side by side, perhaps on the same scaffoldings, as small sections of the inscriptions were being completed day after day. The particular requirements of this building program, in which architects would also have been involved, may thus represent the context in which geometry and proportion were introduced as the organizing principles of Arabic calligraphy (George 2010, 60–68, 95–102). Given the fragmentary nature of the evidence, one cannot rule out an earlier starting point for this development.

Once established, these concepts soon became applied to the calligraphy and layout of Qurʾan manuscripts, which display a strict codification of the letter shapes based on the same horizontal articulation of the lines. Stable ratios of width to height were introduced for the text area, and probably the whole page. The earliest manifestations of this new trend can again be traced back to the period around the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik, with such manuscripts as Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Marcel 13 (Déroche 2004a; 2014: chapter 3; George 2010: 75–78). A major reform of the Arabic script had been carried out, bringing about a rigor and austere elegance unprecedented not only in Hijazi but also in other manuscripts of the Middle East. The Qurʾan had been brought on a par with the most accomplished bibles, while beginning to acquire a distinctive visual identity. Its orthographic notation was also amplified as part of the same process.

The inscriptions at the Dome of the Rock and in later Umayyad religious buildings belonged to programs of mosaic ornament articulated around such elements as plants, jewels, and architectural representations. Like much Umayyad art, these images conveyed an ambiguous message with earthly and paradisal connotations but no obvious narrative or one-dimensional meaning. Notwithstanding subtleties of interpretation, one feature would have leapt to the eyes of contemporaries: the absence of animated creatures (humans, animals, or angels). This marked a profound break with Byzantine iconography. Here, an Islamic attitude towards the role of images in the sacred realm can be seen in the making. Its aniconic stance had antecedents in the Monophysite Christian current, although it is difficult to assess whether the two phenomena were related. At any rate, as part of this process, script was assuming a novel importance among the emerging visual expressions of Islam: at the Great Mosque of Damascus and the rebuilt Prophet's Mosque in Medina, two major projects from the reign of al-Walid (705–715), major inscriptions (now lost) were laid in gold over a dark blue ground as at the Dome of the Rock, and they occupied an even more prominent space, on the qibla wall, the devotional and visual focus of the mosque.

This move from the image of divine incarnation towards an "iconic Word" was not restricted to inscriptions. It naturally extended to Qurʾan manuscripts, where the new types of calligraphy took center stage visually, thereby creating a shift of emphasis from the figurative imagery seen in some luxury bibles. If compared to the vast majority of Christian books produced without illustrations, these Qurʾanic scripts also exuded a distinct sense of harmonious beauty through their geometrical codification. During the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik, the reformed script was simultaneously spread to two other media: milestones indicating the distance to Jerusalem along roads in Greater Syria; and coins, starting with gold issues minted at Damascus in 697 (George 2010: 68–74; see Treadwell, CHAPTER 3). Arabic calligraphy had thus been established as a constant presence in the public sphere, and one that would remain throughout later Islamic history.

In coinage, a second transformation was initiated in 704 at Wasit, the newly founded Umayyad capital of Iraq. Whereas the first epigraphic coins had been adorned with relatively coarse inscriptions, these new silver issues minutely applied to their small surface a geometrical codification of the script. By the time epigraphic designs trickled down to copper coins, Christian subjects of the empire would have carried out their daily transactions with currency bearing the Muslim profession of faith or *shahada* ("There is no God but God, Muhammad is the Prophet of God") and an anti-Trinitarian statement from the Qurʾan ("He is God the One, God the eternal, He begot no one nor was He begotten," Q. 112: 1–3, trans. Abdel Haleem). Being Aramaic or Persian speakers, many of them may not have been able to read these verses, but the visual message was plain: the Arabic script occupied a space that had been filled as far as memory could reach by such symbols as the cross and the portrait of the Byzantine or Sasanian emperor. The faith and empire of Islam, this seemed to proclaim, heralded the emergence of a profoundly new order.

The transformation of coinage at Wasit was in all likelihood instigated by al-Hajjaj, the Umayyad governor of Iraq and the East (694–714), who had founded this new provincial capital only a few years earlier. Several early and reliable textual sources indicate that he also sent Qurʾans to major cities of the empire. Thus Ibn Zabala (early ninth century) records the following statement from his teacher Malik ibn Anas (d. 796), the founder of the Maliki legal rite:

> Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf sent Qurʾans to the capital cities. He sent a large one to Madina, and he was the first to send Qurʾans to the cities. This Qurʾan was in a box on the right-hand side of the column that was made to indicate the tomb of the Prophet, peace be upon him. It would be opened on Friday and Thursday, and people would recite from it for the morning prayer. (George 2010: 86)

The manuscripts sent by al-Hajjaj probably resembled a corpus of monumental Umayyad Qurʾans that has gradually been identified in recent years (Déroche 2002; 2004a; 2014: chapter 4; George 2010: 74–89; von Bothmer 1987). Additional sources also portray him as the initiator of orthographic improvements brought to the Qurʾanic text: the addition of medial *alif*s, the insertion of red vocalization dots, and the invention of the diacritical marks (Hamdan 2010). But these accounts are late and erroneous in at least one respect: the material record clearly shows that diacritical marks were already in existence half a century before the days of al-Hajjaj. This second set of assertions therefore ought to be treated with caution, although its other two aspects are not in themselves implausible. The remainder of the evidence does, in any case, imply that al-Hajjaj played a role in the initial transformation and spread of Arabic script, along with ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and their advisors in Syria.

The accounts of Ibn Zabala and others suggest that large Qurʾan manuscripts were deployed in mosques by Umayyad authorities, where they would be read and seen during ritual, especially Thursday invocations (*duʿaʾ*) and Friday prayer. For the rest of the week, they were stored in wooden coffers within the same space or taken to the palace, which was directly adjacent the main congregational mosque in early Islamic cities (George 2009: 98, 100, 106–107; 2010: 86). Once opened in front of worshippers, their size and layout would have made them stand as a physical embodiment of the divine Word, visible from afar in the prayer hall.

A multilayered relationship between Qurʾans and religious architecture can be discerned in Umayyad patronage. The geometrical codification of script and layout that first emerged in Umayyad Qurʾans seems to reflect a literal "architecture of the page," the transposition of principles rooted in architectural design to a craft based on pen and parchment (George 2010: 102). Having been written according to these principles, the manuscripts were displayed in the architectural "stage" of major mosques, near inscriptions that would have resonated with their calligraphy. Conversely, the most distinctive feature of Umayyad illumination was architectural and vegetal decoration reminiscent of Umayyad buildings. Thus the *sura* markers of Marcel 13, with their columns, vases, and vegetal scrolls, echo Umayyad architectural ornament, especially at the Dome of the Rock (Déroche 2004a, 253–258; George 2010: 78). Even more spectacular are three full-page illuminations from a famous Umayyad Qurʾan discovered in Sanaa some 40 years ago, which originally measured about 51 × 47 cm and might date from the reign of al-Walid (Déroche 2014: 107–118; George 2010: 79–86; von Bothmer 1987). The first image shows a double square encompassing a circle with trees, in what might be a schematic representation of the Dome of the Rock (Figure 4.2). It is followed by two buildings that appear to be idealized images of Umayyad mosques, with fruit trees and plants behind the qibla wall. The illuminations of the Sanaa Qurʾan reflect an exceptional level of craftsmanship, and may have been executed by scribes trained in the finest Christian scriptoria. Their content glorifies Umayyad architectural realizations while also reenacting their symbolism. Building and manuscript seem to have been made to function in concert, mirroring and completing each other.

The masterly quality of Umayyad Qurʾans, their monumentality and their ability to convey multilayered messages are a world away from the humble beginnings of the Hijazi tradition. The spectacular evolution undergone in the space of a few decades was not without its detractors within Muslim society: at an early date, some religious scholars appear to have vigorously opposed Umayyad experiments with the material form of the sacred text. Their conservative views were not upheld by the authorities, but they may have led to the production, in this milieu, of smaller, more austere Qurʾans (George 2010: 89–92).

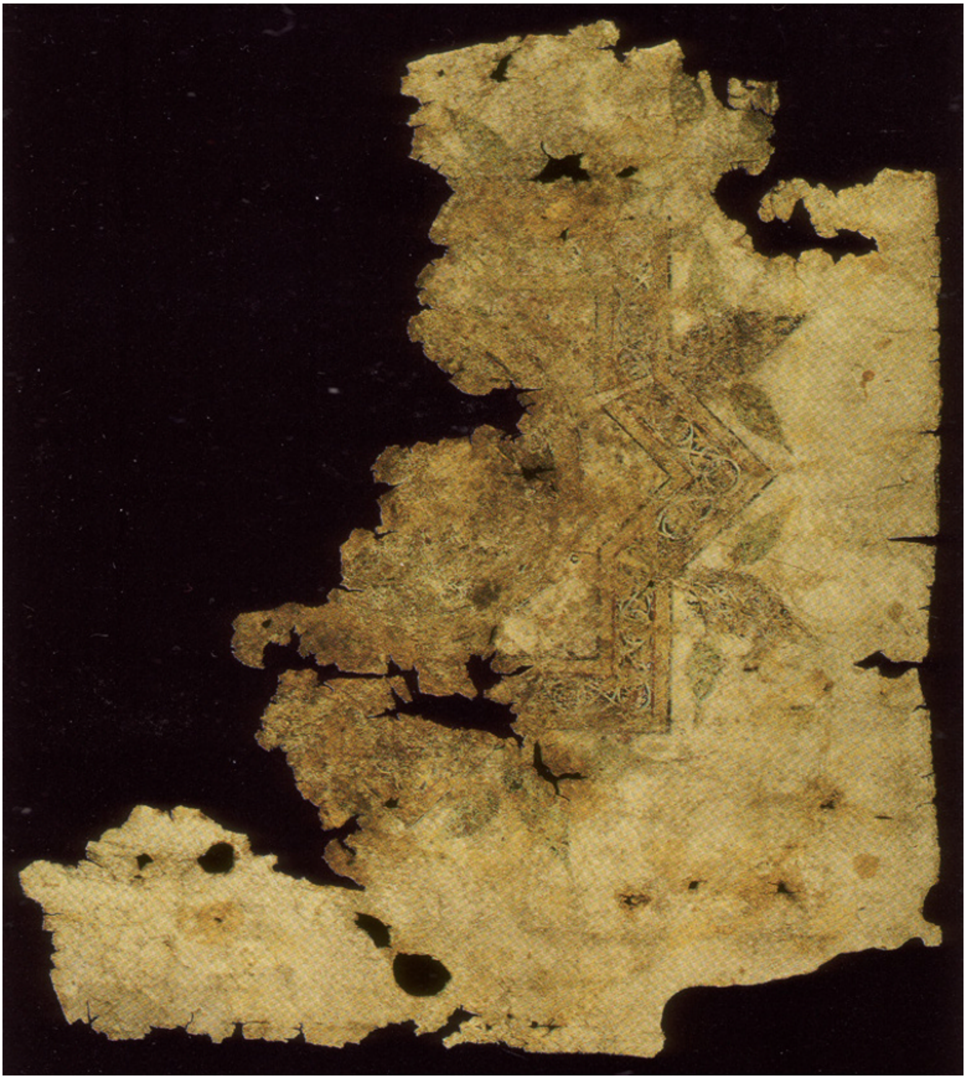

Figure 4.2 Opening illumination of an Umayyad Qurʾan discovered in Sanaa (probably Greater Syria, early eighth century). Source: Sanaa, Dar al-Makhtutat al-Yamaniyya, IN 20-33.1. Page size unknown (original dimensions *c*. 51 × 47 cm). Photo by Hans-Caspar Graf von Bothmer. Reproduced with permission.

Calligraphy at the Height of Abbasid Power (750–*c*. 900)

The Abbasid revolution overthrew the Umayyads in 750 and ushered in a new phase in the history of the Islamic empire, heralded by a shift of its center of gravity from Damascus and Syria to Baghdad and the East. In the early Abbasid era, large luxury Qurʾans continued to be produced, although horizontal formats gradually became predominant, for reasons to which we will soon return. The quality of illumination declined drastically, even in the most lavish commissions. An emblematic manuscript from this period could arguably be the famous "Blue Qurʾan" written in gold over a dark blue ground, although different attributions have been proposed for it (see George 2009 for an overview of these attributions, and Bloom 2015 for a restatement of the tenth-century hypothesis). In the eyes of contemporaries, its color scheme, like that of comparable mosaic inscriptions, would have evoked light shining through darkness – a fitting association for the divine revelation, and one that is frequently expressed in the Qurʾan itself.

Extant manuscripts of the ninth century are much more numerous than those of earlier periods, yet they have also proven more difficult to contextualize. Their abstract geometrical ornament provides fewer grounds for comparison than Umayyad architectural illuminations, and no Qurʾan colophons have survived from before the tenth century, though textual evidence shows that they did exist (George 2015a: 4). The only explicit indicators of date are legal deeds (*waqfiyyat*) endowing a Qurʾan to a mosque, and records of birth scribbled in the margins of a few manuscripts. The earliest of these documents date to the ninth century, but they are extremely rare and do not necessarily indicate the time and place of production, since they could routinely be added to an older Qurʾan. In these conditions, for the Abbasid period even more than for the Umayyad, the cornerstone for the study of Qurʾanic calligraphy is the classification of scripts established by Déroche (1992). To date, seven broad stylistic families have been identified, encompassing a total of 19 Kufic scripts. Because the original names of these scripts cannot be recovered from textual sources, they are designated by a letter followed by a number (e.g., A.I for style A, subgroup I, and so on). This classification is a work in progress to which refinements and additions might still be made: the latest of these is the script type represented by Marcel 13, which has recently been formalized as "O.I" following its identification in a series of other manuscripts (Déroche 2014: chapter 3).

The angular aesthetic of the script first codified under the Umayyads has commonly been called "Kufic" in modern scholarship. Like "Hijazi," the term is a misnomer insofar as it suggests a link with the city of Kufa in Iraq, for which there is no historical evidence; but given that its roots reach at least as far back as the thirteenth century, it has the advantage of being widely understood. The label "Abbasid" has been proposed as an alternative (Déroche 1992: 34), but it is not entirely satisfactory either since the distinction between Umayyad and Abbasid scripts can often be uncertain. For want of a better word, "Kufic" will therefore continue to be used for our present purposes.

The chronology, mutual relationships, and regional dimension of Kufic scripts are still only very partially understood, and Déroche's classification has the benefit of breaking down the huge mass of available evidence into intelligible groups. In the present state of our knowledge, only general remarks can be offered. Some styles, such as O.I, B.I, and C.I, already existed in the Umayyad era, though one cannot exclude that they continued to be written under the early Abbasids. Others, such as C.III, F.I, and D.IV, can be broadly situated at the threshold between the two periods. The D group represents the classical phase of the Kufic tradition. Its precursor, D.IV, probably arose in the eighth century. Between the ninth and early tenth centuries, this stylistic group evolved into several subgroups, with later survivals in the Maghrib, the Islamic West (Déroche 1992: 35–42; George 2009: 80–89; 2015). Additional styles, such as E.I, also existed in this period, but the extant record suggests that the D group was by far the most widespread.

The process whereby some fragments have survived rather than others is largely random. At an early stage in the history of Islam, religious norms coalesced to prevent the casual destruction or disposal of worn-out Qurʾans (George 2011: 421–423; Sadan 1986). Most of the sanctioned methods – for example, burying them like human corpses – inevitably led to their long-term disappearance. The vast majority of the fragments that have survived reflect a single practice: the storage of old manuscripts in sealed storerooms, usually within the precinct of mosques, as at Damascus, Fustat, and Sanaa. Hundreds of thousands of fragments were deposited and eventually forgotten in dark corners of these historical buildings until their gradual rediscovery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What has been preserved through this process may or may not accurately reflect the original range of production – or to use a statistical term, the original "population." For example, there are thousands of extant fragments in style D.I; by contrast, at the present stage, the whole F family is essentially represented by a single luxury manuscript, together with a handful of smaller fragments. While it seems reasonable to conclude that D.I was originally more widespread than F.I, it is difficult to know in what proportions. For other scripts that are attested in less contrasted numbers, inferences are more arduous to draw.

Beyond its scriptural diversity, the Kufic tradition was characterized by a remarkable technical uniformity. Quires were consistently formed as quinions (gatherings of five double leaves, or their equivalent with inserts of single leaves) with the hair side of the parchment facing flesh. Geometrical and proportional principles continued to be applied in virtually every single manuscript page (George 2007; 2010: 55–58). While the establishment of these norms can be traced back to the Umayyad period, the consistency with which they were maintained over the next two centuries is puzzling, as it cannot be entirely explained by the role of a central authority. Judging by their size and by rare survivals of bound volumes, most manuscripts in the D group were probably written as sets of 30 or 60 relatively small volumes, as opposed to a massive single volume for Umayyad and early Abbasid official commissions. This format may have been useful for educational purposes, as different parts of the same Qurʾan could be consulted simultaneously by several people. Together with a growing range of illuminated signs to indicate groups of 5 or 10 verses and sections (*ajzaʾ*), it may also have facilitated the sequential recitation of the text day after day, prayer after prayer, as documented in later ritual practices that continue to this day.

Vocalization is the system of signs used to record orthographic features not included in the consonantal skeleton of the text. Its most important element is the short vowels (*harakat*), which are omitted in the Arabic alphabet but necessary for correct recitation and to distinguish between grammatical cases. In the early stages represented by the Hijazi tradition, the Qurʾanic text was devoid of any such notation. During the Umayyad period, possibly in the days of ʿAbd al-Malik, red dots began to be placed above, on, or below the line to denote the short vowels "a" (*fatha*), "u" (*damma*), and "i" (*kasra*), respectively. This basic system was retained throughout the early Islamic period, and gradually complemented by further orthographic layers. As this process followed its course, some Qurʾans also remained completely unvocalized, probably on the basis of the hostile opinion of some religious circles. Thus once again, this evolution cannot be portrayed as strictly linear: differences may partly be explained by the adoption in some local schools of conventions set by a given authority, and partly by more general regional trends.

Textual sources on early Qurʾanic calligraphy are generally sparse and problematic, but a significant exception pertains to vocalization: *al-Muhkam fi naqt al-masahif* (The Precise on the Vocalization of Qurʾans) by al-Dani (986–1053), a prominent Andalusi scholar of the Qurʾan (Dutton 1999; 2000; George 2015a; 2015b). This technical treatise has made it possible to link different vocalization systems, some of them highly elaborate, with two broad geographical areas: Iraq, Greater Syria, and Iran on the one hand; and Medina and the Islamic West on the other hand. Vocalization can thus provide elements of answer to the vexed issue of regional origins in early Qurʾans (George 2015a; 2015b). The gradual amplification of its notation with many features specifically geared towards recitation also serves as a reminder of the aural dimension of manuscripts, which modern scholarship has tended to treat as flat canvases, a tendency encouraged by their representation as a single page or double spread in print publications. These codices were meant not only to be displayed but also handled, read from, and studied. The sound of the Qurʾan, resonating in cities through cantillation and the call to prayer, was inseparable from the image embodied by calligraphy.

The visual appearance of the whole codex, whether perceived as a closed leather binding or an open spread of calligraphy, also underwent a gradual evolution. Hijazi Qurʾans had generally been vertical, although a few oblong copies are known. Large Umayyad Qurʾans (such as Marcel 13 and the Sanaa Qurʾan) retained a vertical format, but square and oblong manuscripts were also produced in this period. The oblong format became predominant in the Abbasid period before a return to verticality in the tenth century. Oblong formats had the advantage of creating an immediate visual distinction with books other than the Qurʾan, including bibles and Arabic writings. From around the ninth century, the average page size of Qurʾans diminished, even in manuscripts intended for use in mosques. Monumentality was conveyed by enlarging the script on relatively small pages while leaving plenty of breathing space between words and in the margins (Déroche 1990–1991: 61).

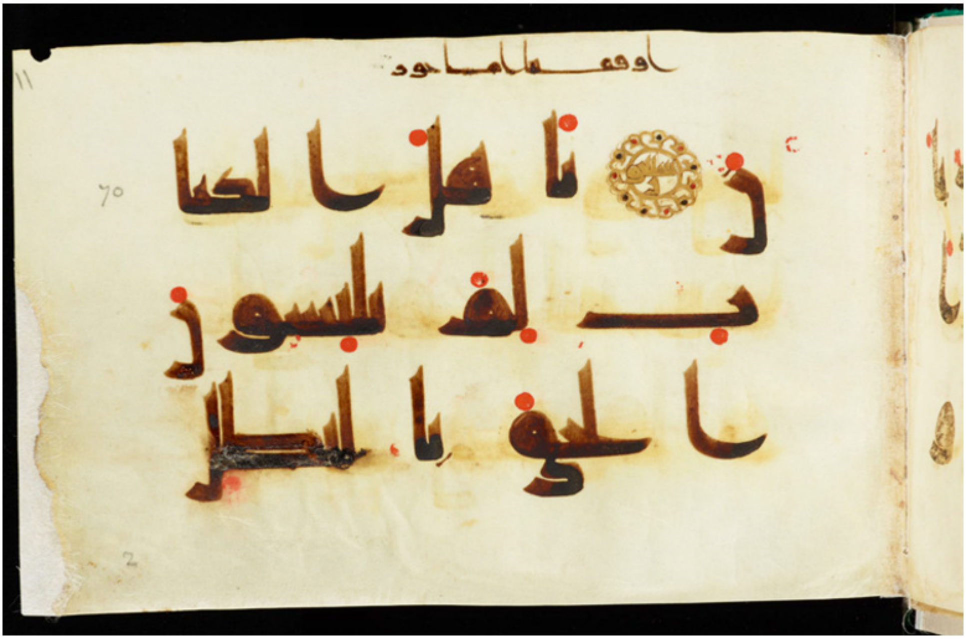

FIGURE 4.3 The Qurʾan of Amajur, classical Kufic script (Greater Syria, in or shortly after 876). Source: Cambridge University Library, MS. Add. 1116, f. 11r. Page dimensions *c.* 12.5 × 19.5 cm. Reproduced with permission.

One well-known manuscript exemplifies this trend: the Qurʾan endowed in 876 by Amajur, the Abbasid governor of Syria, to an unnamed religious institution in Tyre (Figure 4.3; Déroche 1990–1991; George 2003). It measures just about 13 × 20 cm; yet with only three lines per page, which amount to a few words at most, its script remains imposing. Such a lavish consumption of parchment was unusual for Qurʾans, and even more so for other books. Christian monastic communities of Abbasid Palestine, for example, often resorted to more modest means, by erasing the leaves of older codices, folding them to a smaller size and rewriting them as palimpsests (George 2011: esp. 423–425). The contrast could not be greater with the Qurʾan of Amajur and its 30 volumes of fine new parchment, produced in the same geographical area during the same period.

Several Qurʾans written in the same style, also in 30 volumes, are known from extant documents to have been endowed at the Great Mosque of Damascus in the early tenth century (Déroche 1983). The persons named in the legal deeds have not been identified although one of them, Abu al-Najm Badr, is called *mawla amir al-muʾminin* ("Client of the Commander of the Faithful"): this title, which implies he was under the political protection of the caliph, is also given to Amajur in his Qurʾan. These two manuscripts show that, as in the Umayyad period, political elites continued to be involved in the commissioning of Qurʾans intended for public use, which required considerable financial means. The available evidence is too scant to allow generalizations, however: people stemming from other social groups, such as religious scholars and wealthy urban notables, may also have acted as patrons.

The background of scribes in this period remains equally elusive. One might logically assume that some of them were religious scholars, whose training rested on the memorization, mastery, and exegesis of the Qurʾanic text. Al-Dani, the author of the above-mentioned treatise, is said by his biographers to have been a proficient calligrapher, an assertion that seems borne out by some allusions in his writings. He himself cites the colophon of a Spanish Qurʾan copied and vocalized in 842 by a disciple of al-Ghazi ibn Qays, a traditionalist and follower of Malik ibn Anas in Medina (Dutton 1999: 119; George 2015a: 2–3, 8–9). While this confirms an overlap between the worlds of scribes and ulama, other indications suggest that Qurʾanic calligraphy could also be a specialized craft, in a prefiguration of the book markets of later Islamic times. Several sources of the period, such as the *Musannaf* (lit. the Assorted) of ʿAbd al-Razzaq al-Sanʿani (744–827), the *Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 850), and the *Kitab al-masahif* (Book of Qurʾan Manuscripts) of Ibn Abi Dawud al-Sijistani (844–929), record opinions of religious scholars for or against the copying of the Qurʾan for pay, which implies that the practice existed in their day (references in George 2010: 174, nn. 112–116). In the eleventh century, the historian Ibn al-Fayyad also noted, "In the eastern suburb of Cordoba, there were 170 women who copied the Qurʾan in Kufic calligraphy" (Déroche 2004b: 49; George 2015b: 88–89). These female scribes were clearly not religious scholars, and they appear to have practiced their skill in a specific part of the city. The available evidence, which is very fragmentary, suggests that different social groups were active in this field.

The Transformation of Arabic Writing in the Tenth Century

The tenth century has left us the earliest extant Qurʾan colophons, and through them a wider array of contextual evidence than for previous periods. This was an age of gradual but profound transformation for Arabic calligraphy. Qurʾanic scripts first shifted towards an aesthetic paradigm at the confluence of Kufic and secular scripts called the New Style by Déroche; various other names, such as broken Kufic, have also been used (Blair 2006: 143–144). In this paradigm, the geometrical layout of earlier Qurʾanic calligraphy was loosened. Letter shapes became highly stylized, with accentuated contrasts in the thickness of the strokes, a marked extenuation, and a strong inflection of angles. Even more than Kufic, these complex scripts would have required skill and precise hand movements on the calligrapher's part –as for example in the Isfahan Qurʾan, written in 993 (Figure 4.4). Subtle changes also affected the production of the whole book. Smaller formats became increasingly common: at its most extreme, this trend saw the appearance of Qurʾans that could be carried in a pocket, perhaps as amulets.

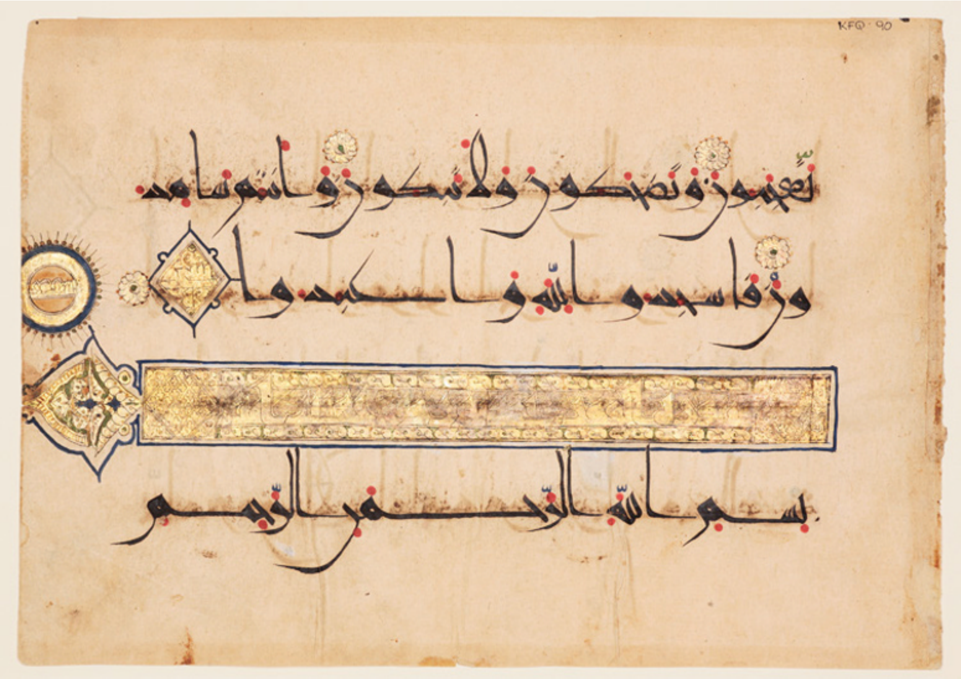

FIGURE 4.4 The Isfahan Qurʾan, written in the New Style (Isfahan, 993). London and Geneva, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, KFQ90 recto. Source: © Nour Foundation. Reproduced with permission.

More lines of script tended to be fitted into these smaller pages, and Qurʾans began to be written on paper, a Chinese technology imported into the Islamic world in the eighth century, which was less expensive than parchment. The formulae employed for the constitution of quires became less standardized (Déroche 1992: 132–137; George 2010: 115–125, 143–146).

One factor runs as a constant thread behind these transformations: the decrease of production costs. In this period, Muslims came to form a majority of the population in most parts of the Islamic world. This must have created an increasing demand for Qurʾan manuscripts, whether for collective or personal worship, especially as many recent converts were not native Arabic speakers. One aspect of this phenomenon represents the climax of a process initiated in the Umayyad period: the growth of orthographic notation, which implied a gradually reduced reliance on complete memorization by the reader. Qurʾans of the tenth century contain an increasingly detailed record of every possible inflection in the recitation, and of variant readings (George 2015a; 2015b). Verse, word, and even letter counts were also given as illuminated tables in the opening pages. This growing systematization of the text mirrors the expansion of the Qurʾanic sciences, which were reaching a new threshold in this period.

At the level of calligraphy, the process of change initiated with the New Style was taken a step further towards the end of the tenth century with the rise of geometrically codified round scripts, which combined the ease of writing of everyday scripts with the elegance of Qurʾanic calligraphy. The "modern" vocalization system based on miniature letters, rather than colored dots, became widespread around that time, even though it had been in existence for well over a century: the Qurʾan scholar Ibn Mujahid (d. 936) stated that readers comprehend shapes more quickly than colors, which could imply a cognitive rationale for this change (George 2015a: 8). These two trends in calligraphy – the angular New Style and the cursive round scripts – continued to coexist until the latter eventually prevailed in Qurʾans from the twelfth century onwards. To this day, after centuries of further refinement and diversification, the same aesthetic remains at the basis of Arabic script.

From an early stage, calligraphy followed a separate course of development in the Maghrib, the western Islamic lands, between modern Tunisia and Spain. Some manuscripts produced in those lands do reflect mainstream evolutions in calligraphy: notable examples in the New Style include the "Palermo Qurʾan," made in the Sicilian capital in 983, and the "Qurʾan of the Nurse," commissioned in Qayrawan by the nurse of the Zirid amir Ibn Badis in 1040. But calligraphy was also beginning to acquire local specificities, as suggested by a group of Kufic Maghribi Qurʾans datable to the tenth and eleventh centuries (George 2015b: 81–89); and by a more distinctively Maghribi aesthetic with roots in secular bookhands of the ninth century (Déroche 2004b: 67–96). With its thin strokes and accentuated roundness, the latter stylistic tendency remained dominant in its region of origin until the modern era. It continues to be practiced there today, albeit less widely than the round scripts from the central and eastern Islamic lands.

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5

Sacred Spaces in Early Islam

Mattia Guidetti

Narratives on Mecca and Medina

Recent archaeological discoveries are increasingly shedding light on the material culture of the Arabian Peninsula before the appearance of Islam. During late antiquity, Arabia, far from being an artistic vacuum, developed its own indigenous traditions and came to be integrated into international networks connecting the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea (Franke and Gierlichs 2011; Finster 2010; Hoyland 2001). However, the nature of the religious places of Arabia on the eve of the Islamic conquest is still largely unclear, so that the sacred landscape of sixth- and seventh-century Mecca and Medina – the cities the Prophet Muhammad belonged to and in which the Revelation took place – is difficult to assess. The earliest mosques are also undocumented archaeologically, starting with the one used by the Prophet's community in Medina after the *hijra* of 622 (the migration from Mecca to Medina).

The earliest religious building firmly dated is the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (692), while the existence of sacred places during the first 70 years of Islamic civilization is only retrievable through written sources. Seventh-century Islamic written documents are limited to coins, graffiti, inscriptions, and administrative papyri and although they help to elucidate some aspects of the early period, they say little on religious places. Contemporary non-Islamic sources are more fecund, though often polemical and biased. Muslims (called Ishmaelites or Hagarenoi – late antique definitions of the Arabs, or *muhajirun* – those who migrated) are said to have had a sacred place in Arabia and to have prayed in a building called a "mosque," while religious buildings in Damascus and Jerusalem are recorded (Hoyland 1997: 545–550). Later Islamic written sources (dated from the late eighth century onwards) are instead generous with the period of the

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origins. The Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, for instance, is described in detail and this allowed scholars to speculate about its nature and functions (Bisheh 1979; Caetani 1905: 1, 447–460). More recently, however, the reliability of later historical, religious, and biographical sources has been radically questioned. Since the late 1970s the "revisionist school" has urged scholars to consider how these sources reflect the way later Muslims reconstructed their origins rather than what really happened (Donner 2010: 39–56; Johns 2003: 411–412).

With regard to the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, Johns has, for instance, convincingly argued for the existence of a parallel between the narratives about the foundation of the mosque in Medina and the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (Johns 1999: 103–109). Both sites are described as former agricultural estates bought by the prophets (Muhammad and David) after they were chosen by divinely inspired guides. It is likely that the later narrative, describing the foundation of the earliest mosque of Islam, was a calque of the biblical narrative on the temple as was retold in early Islamic tradition. Whatever its architectural appearance, it is plausible that the site of the mosque was at the same time the place in which Muhammad spent his private and public life in Medina, a place considered sacred by his followers who prayed there and a sort of headquarters for the community. Besides the Mosque of the Prophet, we possess some more information on early Islamic Medina. Before the arrival of Muhammad, the town was allegedly composed of a cluster of small settlements inhabited by pagan Arabs and several large Jewish families. The settlement of those who had migrated (*muhajirun*) from Mecca and the conversion of new people both from among the Arabs in Medina and from the surrounding areas (*ansar*, "the helpers") completely changed the equilibrium in the town. Accommodation was found through the so-called Charter of Medina, a sort of agreement listing duties and rights of the groups forming a definite local community (*umma*), "to the exclusion of other people." The community was formed by those who acknowledged the prophetic quality of Muhammad and some of the Jewish groups who joined the "believers" (as the Charter defines the components of the *umma*) as clients (Donner 2010: 72–75, 227–232; Lecker 2004: 32–39).

The "Charter of Medina" articulated the conditions under which security and protection would be provided to all submitters. One passage states that the valley of Medina was considered a "sacred space" (*haram*) for those accepting the agreement (Lecker 2004: 32–39). *Haram* was a pre-Islamic notion indicating a space or a time in which the usual social activities were suspended. Likewise *ihram*, from the same root of "h-r-m," indicates the purity of a person who, to maintain this status, is supposed to refrain from activities such as hunting, sexual intercourse, and cutting or trimming his or her hair. A *haram* space not only contained a religious structure such as a sanctuary or shrine but was also a space in which harvesting, hunting, and killing (enemies included) were considered illegal and prohibited (*haram*). A *haram* space was therefore separated from the mundane world and dedicated to the god(s) alone; it did, however, also serve social-political needs such as reinforcing alliances among different tribes (Serjeant 1962: 48–57; Munt 2014: 42–93).

In late antique Arabia such sacred enclosures were quite common. The *Book of the Idols* by Ibn al-Kalbi (d. 819) presents a long list of idols, stelae, temples, shrines (some called Kaʿba), and *haram* areas held sacred by Arabs on the eve of the Revelation of Islam. But for Muhammad and those who had emigrated, the most relevant sacred space was apparently the Kaʿba in Mecca, the pagan temple of their home town surrounded by a *haram* area (see CHAPTER 2).

Although there is no directly related material evidence on the early Islamic transformation of the Kaʿba into an Islamic shrine, it is worth considering the way that later sources describe the whole process; whether or not they reflect what really occurred in Muhammad's days, they certainly helped to shape an early Muslim reverence for the shrine of Mecca. The *Life of Muhammad* (the biography of the Prophet edited by Ibn Hisham in the early ninth century and based on the earlier work by Ibn Ishaq) informs that in 630, when Mecca fell into the hands of the Muslim army, the existing Kaʿba was the building which had been reconstructed by Meccans in 608. The previous structure had been destroyed by a fire and the members of the Quraysh group (to which the Prophet belonged), the most powerful in Mecca at the time, had decided to have it rebuilt. Sources describe it as a simple building: the walls were made of alternating rows of stones and wood, two rows of three internal pillars supported the wooden roof. The interior was decorated with paintings of trees, angels, and prophets (including Abraham, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary). The sanctuary of the Kaʿba also had statues of all the idols worshipped by the local population, among whom the god Hubal was the most important (King 2004). According to Islamic tradition, Muhammad had played a decisive role in the reconstruction of the Kaʿba in 608, before the Revelation. He was chosen by the Meccan elite to solve a dispute which arose between the different families of the Quraysh tribal group; the debate concerned who was to have the privilege of setting the sacred black stone, believed to have fallen from heaven, back in place after the reconstruction. Muhammad suggested putting the stone on a cloak with the four corners lifted by representatives from different families: the collective effort was then completed by Muhammad himself, who inserted the stone in its place (Ibn Ishaq 1955: 84–87). This narrative is particularly important because, besides being a premonition of the prophethood of Muhammad (in the year 608 the Qurʾanic Revelation had not yet started), it is also part of a general strategy to present him as the new Abraham. The latter, in fact, is described in the Qurʾan as the first monotheist, builder of the Kaʿba, the first temple on earth, and destroyer of the idols worshipped by his contemporaries (Q. II: 126–128; XXI: 50–71; XXII: 27–30).

The role of Muhammad as the "new" Abraham and "restorer" of the original religion of Abraham was definitely to be fulfilled after the conquest of Mecca in 630. Again, according to the Islamic tradition, after having conquered Mecca, Muhammad went to the Kaʿba and paid homage to the black stone. The building, as well as the veneration of the black stone and the pilgrimage ritual, was adopted by the Prophet for his community, or, to put it in a Qurʾanic perspective, restored to the true religion, undoing the corruption that had diverted Abraham's primordial monotheist message to idolatry and polytheism (Figure 5.1). The final "restoration" of the Kaʿba occurred through an act of erasure: Muhammad, following the Qurʾanic Revelation of Abraham's actions, destroyed the idols and removed the images present in the building. Only a pair of ram's horns

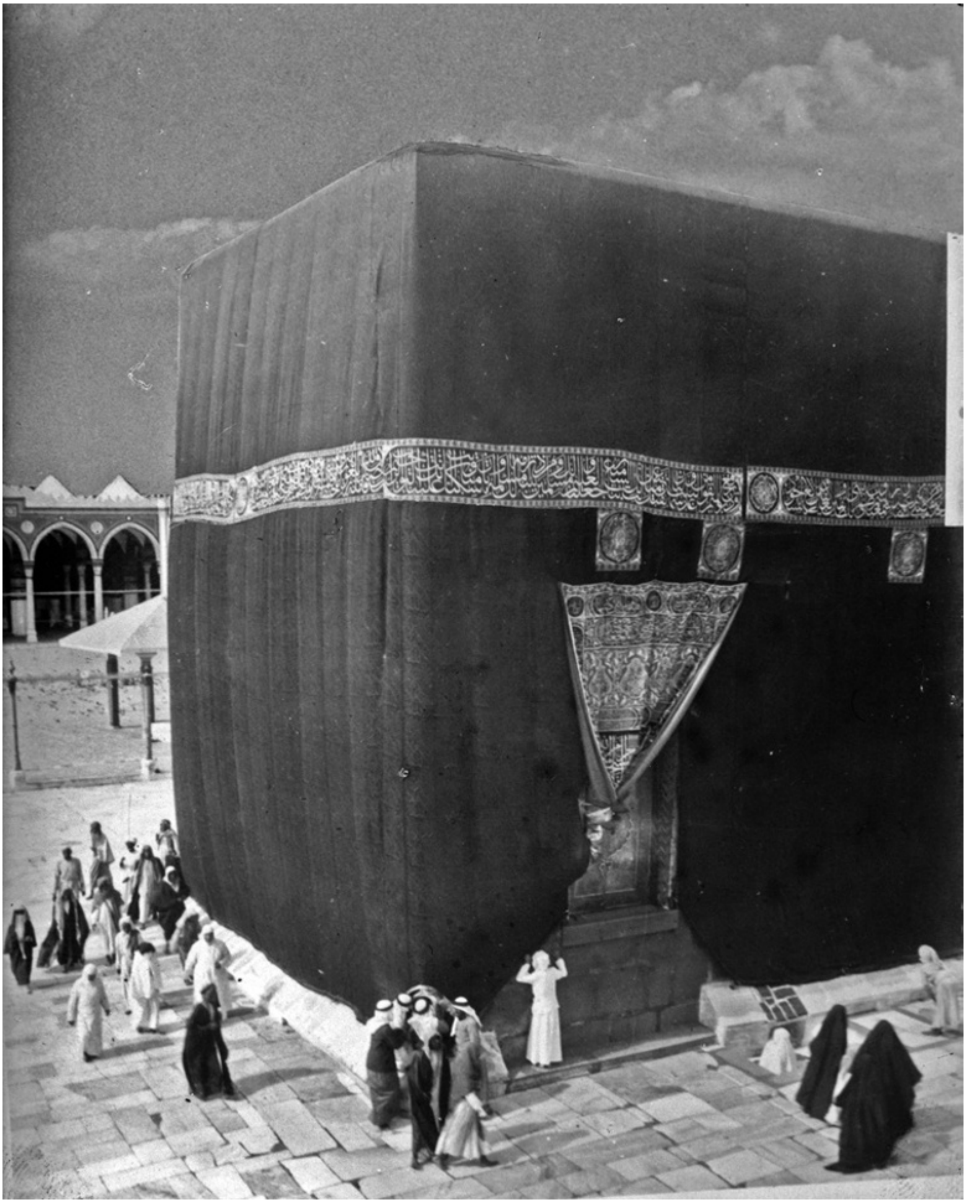

FIGURE 5.1 The Kaʿba, Mecca, *c.* 1910. Source: Photo Department, American Colony Jerusalem, Matson Photographic Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [LC-DIG-matpc-04658].

(considered to be the animal sacrificed by Abraham in the place of Ishmael) and a painting representing the Christ child in the Virgin Mary's lap were allegedly saved from the conversion of the sanctuary (Ibn Ishaq 1955: 552–553).

One of the innovations brought by the Islamization of the sacred landscape and the call for the oneness of God was that a single place, the Kaʿba in Mecca, was chosen as the religious center to the detriment of other mosques (Arabic *masjid*s, of which the first meaning is place of prostration) oriented towards this center. That process in turn helped to cement a sociopolitical unity defined by the term "umma."

From a social-anthropological point of view, the Kaʿba of Mecca should be considered as a site with an inherent sacredness which was appropriated by early Muslims who made it the topographical sacred center of their religious system. In the case of Medina though, everything was "constructed" around the new figure of the Prophet. The antiquity of the Kaʿba in Mecca helped to establish a link with the prophet Abraham, who was directly associated with the site, whereas in Medina Muhammad was presented as the founder of a new pivotal place of worship on a new ground, as were David and Solomon in Jerusalem. Although the area of the Kaʿba in Mecca and the Mosque of Medina were to be refurbished in the following centuries, they remained the two holiest sacred places and spaces in Islam exactly because of their, both real and imagined, connections with the origins of Islam.

Early Islamic Religious Spaces: Plan and Structure

Although its chronology is uncertain, early Muslims do seem to have had a prototype of the mosque in mind. This model, called by Johns (1999) "the concept of the mosque," was composed of an enclosure divided into a courtyard and a hypostyle hall oriented towards Mecca. The early existence of this model is discernible in two mosques in which the earliest phase has been roughly dated to the late seventh century: the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque of Kufa (Hillenbrand 1994: 66–68; Johns 1999: 59–69). Generally speaking, early mosques differed from other contemporary sacred buildings owing to the emphasis put on the breadth rather than the depth of the building, thereby presenting inverted proportions when compared, for instance, to basilical churches (Creswell 1969: 1, 17–20). This might have been related to the needs of the new Muslim liturgy, which, in fact, emphasizes the importance of the qibla wall (the wall of a mosque oriented towards the Kaʿba in Mecca) rather than a specific shrine within the mosque. Later developments were to rapidly increase the importance of the mihrab and the area in front of it, but the arrangement of a congregation of Muslim worshippers within a mosque largely favored rows parallel to the qibla wall rather than lines perpendicular to it (Hillenbrand 1994: 36–39).

It must be noted that the emphasis on breadth also appears to have been relevant within certain Christian traditions. In the area of the Tur Abdin (southeast Anatolia) a number of monastic churches exhibit a single nave with three apsidal chambers located on the longest side. Such is the case, for instance, of Mar Ibrahim in Midyat, Mar Yaqub in Salah, and Mar Gabriel in Qartamin: all three Syriac monasteries have churches composed of a broad prayer hall running from south to north and a line of three rooms located in front of the western entrance (Bell and Mango 1982: 10–13; 31–38).

In order to appreciate the degree of adaptation that the initial typical plan of the mosque underwent with the passing of time, it is worth comparing the plan of the first foundation of the mosque of Kufa (Iraq, second half of the seventh century) to the plan of the Great Mosque of Qayrawan (Tunisia), as refurbished in the mid-ninth century by the Aghlabids (vassals of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad). The early mosque in Kufa consisted most likely of a rectangular courtyard space with no walls and a hypostyle hall built on the qibla side, with the residence of the governor of the region nearby. Although the basic structure, composed of an oriented enclosure divided into a courtyard and a hypostyle hall, continued to be considered suitable, in Qayrawan new elements enriched and transformed the space of the mosque. A massive squared minaret axially aligned with the mihrab dominates the exterior of the mosque, a huge enclosing wall separates the mosque from the city around it, a tripartite monumental vestibule covered by a dome is inserted in the center of the prayer hall façade, and a larger and higher central nave leads from the courtyard to the mihrab. The latter takes the form of a deep niche decorated with marble, gilt wooden panels, and luster ceramic tiles imported from Abbasid Iraq, while the space in front of it is covered by a second dome and flanked by a richly carved wooden pulpit (*minbar*). Finally, a small wooden enclosure (*maqsura*) stands to the right of the *mihrab* area, and the last bay of the 11 aisles of the prayer hall running perpendicular to the qibla wall is deeper and higher, as is the central nave (Figure 5.2). The transformation of the sanctuary, however, was a continuous process that started relatively early. Already under the Umayyads (661–750), and especially during al-Walid's refurbishment of the mosques of Jerusalem, Medina, and Damascus, elements such as the domed space in front of the mihrab, the concave niche of the mihrab, and the *maqsura* were introduced into mosques. The excellent state of preservation of the ninth-century Great Mosque of Qayrawan helps to visualize the final result of this long-term process of transformation of early Islamic sacred architecture.

These changes reflect both the development of liturgical and religious notions and the rise of Islam as a universal religion professed by the now masters of the largest empire on earth. The emphasis on the area of the mihrab suggests the increasing value given to the figure of the Prophet Muhammad. From the early eighth century on, the mihrab took the form of a semicircular niche: the empty space of the niche – towards which the worshippers prayed – was intended as a commemoration of Muhammad, who used to lead the prayer one step in front of his community (Whelan 1986). The *minbar* – a high chair or pulpit for the preacher – was also related to the Prophet, who is told to have introduced it in Medina. His figure was commemorated by choosing to leave the upper two steps

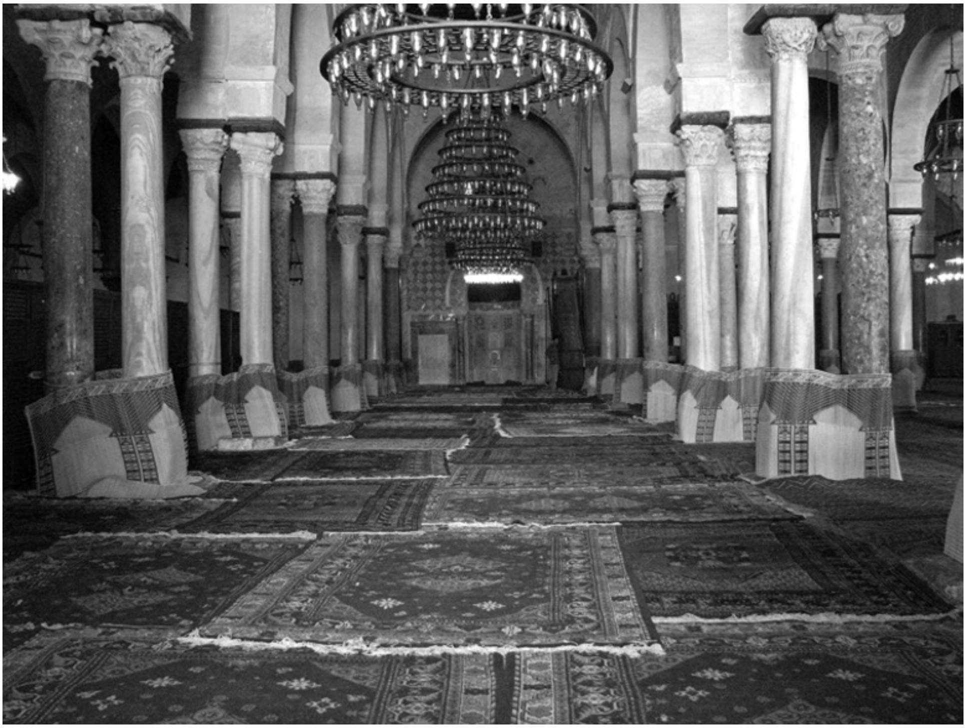

FIGURE 5.2 The main nave of the sanctuary leading to the mihrab, Great Mosque of Qayrawan. Source: Mattia Guidetti. Reproduced with permission.

of the pulpit, the space he occupied when delivering sermons in his lifetime, unused. Generally speaking, in the Qayrawan mosque the mihrab area is made the focus of attention through its glittering decoration, the presence of a dome, and the privileged nave created to provide access from the courtyard.

The rise of a more complex symbolism in Islamic liturgy proceeded at the same pace with the intrusion of political authorities into religious spaces. The *maqsura*, or royal enclosure, was intended to be a sort of private area within the sacred space of the mosque with the aim of giving shelter to political authorities: the Friday prayer, during which the ruler's name was mentioned in the *khutba* (sermon), was one of the few public exposures of political authorities in medieval Islam, an occasion which was also vulnerable to the risk of aggression. The early caliphs or local governors were often able to access the prayer hall of the mosque directly from their palaces through a private entrance located on the qibla wall, a practice that evolved throughout the Umayyad period. Mosques and their courtyards were also theatres for public ceremonies involving political authority and this triggered, particularly from the Abbasid period onward, the organization of processions in and out of the prayer hall, which often no longer abutted the caliphal palace, as was the case in the ninth-century Abbasid capital of Samarra (Necipoğlu 1993: 5–15).

This political function of the mosque, together with the rising visual importance of the mihrab within the prayer hall, made the central nave connecting the courtyard to the mihrab stand out, as in Qayrawan. Thereafter the entrance to the prayer hall took monumental form, often inspired by secular architecture. In those mosques where the aisles of the prayer hall were parallel to the qibla wall, the central nave was a transept. Such is the case of the transept of the Great Mosque of Damascus (705–715) (Figure 5.3), whose monumental entrance has been compared to the entrance of the late antique palace of Theodoric in Ravenna as depicted in the sixth-century mosaic of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo (Creswell 1969: 197). This overlap with aulic architecture may have been intended to aggrandize the architecture of the mosque and to make it a space suitable for the presence of political authorities. Interestingly, the same adoption of "palatial" forms took place in the eastern part of the caliphate with the appearance of the iwan, a pointed vaulted hall opened only on one side. The iwan, an architectural form widely used in Iranian palatial architecture in the pre-Islamic period, was introduced into mosques (such as those of Tarikh Khana, Fahraj, and Na'in) with the same function as the main nave or transept widespread in the Mediterranean area, though the date of its earliest appearance is unclear (Hillenbrand 1994: 100–102).

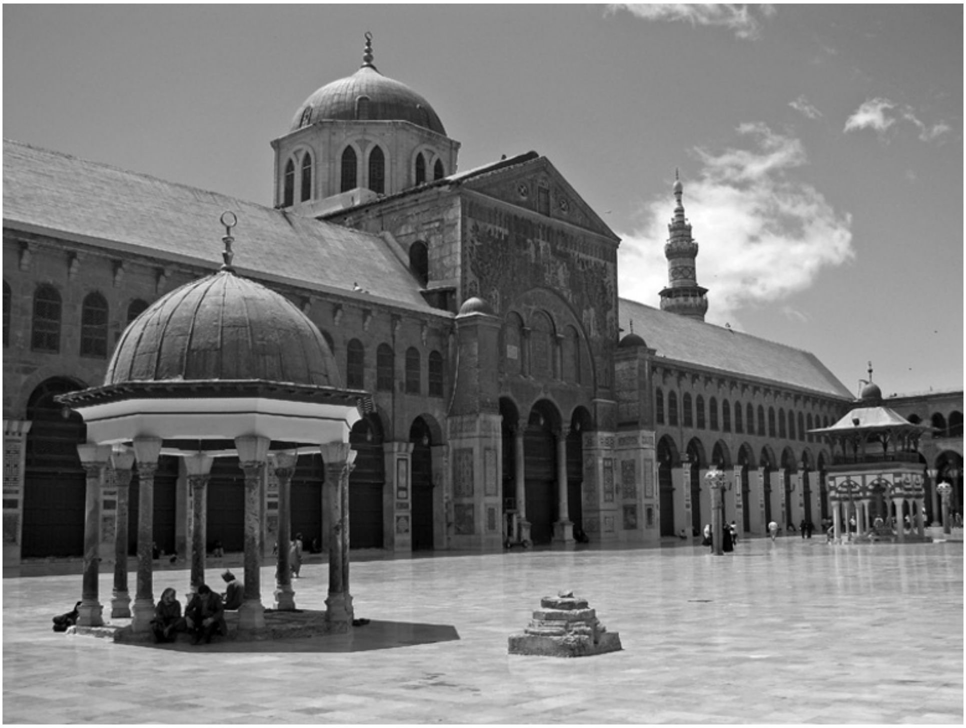

FIGURE 5.3 The courtyard and façade of the sanctuary, Great Mosque of Damascus. Source: Mattia Guidetti. Reproduced with permission.

Just as new functions related to the increasing complexity of Muslim society and transformations in ritual practices (from the early caliphs to the Umayyads and Abbasids) played a role in the development of religious architecture in early times, so did the spread of Islam in geographical areas with diverse building traditions. Some changes reveal the assimilation of elements belonging to different regional traditions into the mosque structure. First introduced under the Umayyad dynasty as square towers exceeding the roof of the mosque, minarets give a great sense of the variety in early Islamic architecture. Comparing the contemporary mid-ninth-century helicoidal minaret of Abbasid Samarra in Mesopotamia with the massive square tower of Qayrawan allows us to assess the importance of local traditions in the construction of visual culture. The Samarran spiral construction might descend from fire temples which were built on the top of towers whenever there was not a natural elevation nearby. A connection with Babylonian ziggurats has also been put forward. By contrast, the pyramidal three-tiered shape of the minaret of Qayrawan might have been a reinterpretation of the Roman lighthouses built on the Tunisian coast, as depicted in Roman mosaics. It is not without significance that one of the Arabic words used for minaret – *manara* – means the place of light or fire and that, in early Islamic times, the call for prayer came from the entrance or the roof of the mosque rather than from the top of minarets (Bloom 1989). In both cases, Qayrawan and Samarra, the minarets stand on axis with the mihrab: an arrangement that became a visual symbol of Abbasid power, following the introduction of a single minaret on the axis of the mihrab in the ninth-century caliphal mosques of Samarra.

One further sacred place shows the effect that the encounter with non-Islamic traditions had on early Islamic religious architecture: the Dome of the Rock, built in 692 on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Grabar 2006; Kaplony 2002; Necipoğlu 2008; Rosen-Ayalon 1989). A double octagonal shell surrounds a circular structure built around the sacred rock, an outcrop of Mount Moriah. Four pillars, alternating with three columns, support the high drum and the dome crowning the central area of the building above the rock. Such a central domed construction built over and around one focal point is part of the family of commemorative buildings identified as rotunda and martyria, which date back to Roman and Byzantine times. The plan of the Dome of the Rock is based on sophisticated geometric calculations revealing a command of planning and construction techniques comparable to other complex late antique interpretations of round classical buildings such as the Mausoleum of Theodoric in Ravenna (*c.* 520), which presents a dodecagonal ground plan at the exterior and a cross-like one at the interior. Despite certain similarities, the size and compactness of the Dome of the Rock – together with its luxurious decoration – set it apart from hypothetical local models such as the dome chamber of the Holy Sepulchre or the octagonal structure of the Kathisma church, the latter structure also built around a rock on the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem (Avner 2010; Grabar 2006: 98–107).

The Location of Sacredness in Early Islam

Scrutiny of the different strategies implemented by early Muslims in founding their own religious buildings might help to assess the process of creating an Islamic sacred landscape as well as the fate of pre- and non-Islamic sacred precincts. As mentioned above, the cases of Mecca and Medina attest to two different procedures. In Mecca, Muslims appropriated and transformed a pre-existing sacred site, while in Medina they created a holy site out of nothing by interpreting and expanding the memories of the life of the Prophet Muhammad that crystalized around the place he used to pray in (Munt 2004: 94–101).

With the rise of Islam and the conquest of a vast territory, the decision about the placement of the new sacred buildings increasingly involved various legal, topographical, and ideological factors. In the early Islamic period, congregational mosques were often placed either adjacent to the palace of the local authority, as in the caliphal mosque in Damascus, or even the tiny Umayyad city of ʿAnjar (built *c.* 715) in Lebanon. They could also be located adjacent to active urban areas such as marketplaces, which were often refurbished and implemented under Islamic rule, as in Jerash and Palmyra (Walmsley 2007: 77–98).

The foundation of a religious place on virgin soil implied the creation of narratives aimed at making sacred a site which had no association with any pre-Islamic sacredness. This process is especially noticeable when, owing to the rise of the Muslim population in a given city, an existing mosque was enlarged and had its structure radically transformed by later local Muslim rulers. Often, the foundational period of a specific place (and therefore of its Islamization) was evoked in later rebuildings in order to strengthen the aura of a mosque. In Medina this occurred quite early on, and ninth-century written texts describe how specific places within the mosque related to the biography of the venerated figure of Muhammad were preserved within the new building. A recurrent tradition, for instance, connects specific pillars to those between which the Prophet used to lead the prayer or pray himself. The tomb of the Prophet was located within the Mosque of Medina and despite the objections of some theologians, who worried about it becoming the locus of idolatry, it generated obvious veneration among the believers (Munt 2014: 103–115). On a smaller scale, every town slowly acquired a corpus of traditions pertaining to the local origins of Islam. In the Aghlabid period rebuilding of the above-mentioned congregational Mosque of Qayrawan, allegedly established by Uqba Ibn Nafi (the commander of the Muslims during the conquest of the province of Africa around 670), a new mihrab installed in the ninth century was said to have incorporated the mihrab of the first mosque. Marble openwork slabs suggest to the viewer the presence of an earlier mihrab in the space hidden in between the mosque's exterior wall and that of the new mihrab niche. That space, although it actually seems to not contain anything, was explained by Muslim scholars and traditionalists (such as al-Bakri in the eleventh century) as preserving the memory of the mosque founded shortly after the conquest of North Africa at the time of the foundation of Qayrawan. By referring to the time of the origins of Islam in the area, the new mosque was described as lying upon certain and sacred foundations.

At the same time, when early Muslims settled in the conquered cities, they were obliged to contend with existing sacred geographies and topographies. The seventh-century Islamic conquest often occurred through the surrender of the local communities which were granted their properties (including the sacred buildings) in exchange for the payment of a poll tax. The pre-Islamic sacred buildings, often focally placed within the urban texture, were therefore protected by Islamic law so that they continued to exert an important socioreligious role across the urban communities. All these aspects contributed to the phenomenon of Muslims building their own places of worship within or in close proximity to buildings dedicated to non-Islamic worship. Aleppo, in northern Syria, is a case in point: the Umayyad congregational mosque was built around 715 on a plot of land a few meters east of the main church of the city. The area was part of the precinct of the church and used as a garden and burial area. Although the church property was reduced to make room for the new mosque, the main Christian cathedral church was left untouched so that the whole area – located within the commercial quarter beneath the natural hill hosting the citadel – now became a sacred precinct for diverse communities. At the same time Aleppo hosted a substantial Jewish community. At least two synagogues are recorded in the northern quarter of the walled city, nearby the gate known as the Gate of the Jews. The synagogues were in use during the medieval period and some remains of one building shows Byzantine decoration suggesting a late antique date for its foundation (Sauvaget 1941: 60–62, 128, pls. IX.3, LIII–LIV).

The juxtaposition of a new mosque with an existing Christian church or shrine was repeated in several towns, reflecting the composition of the early Islamic society in which Muslims were but a ruling minority (Guidetti 2013). A few cases show how some Christian *loca sancta* were adopted by Muslims, either to patrol a place held sacred by the local population or to exploit the religious power of the site. Such is the case, for instance, for the mosque built in the town of Rusafa (east of Aleppo) against a wall of the great complex of St. Sergius, venerated by numerous communities from its construction in late antiquity, and especially popular with Christian Arabs. In order to allow the circulation of pilgrims, the room in which the relics of the saint were located was accessible through both the church and a northern courtyard, which in turn was accessible from the public street. From the early eighth century, the same courtyard was, however, potentially used by Muslims since a gateway was created along the qibla wall of the mosque allowing the passage from the mosque to the courtyard and vice versa (Key Fowden 2002: 134–139; Sack 1996). In this specific case, one faces the existence of a sacred space, created to facilitate the circulation of pilgrims (both Christian and Muslim), which also worked as a sort of buffer zone between the religious spaces of the Christian and Muslim communities. Although written sources do not help to further elucidate its rationale, the congregational mosque of Rusafa was part of a broader architectural program including *extramuros* palaces and a marketplace, indicating the intention to exploit the sacredness of the Christian place, which attracted pilgrims from as far away as the Iranian plateau (Key Fowden 1999). The case of Rusafa was probably not exceptional. Although the exact dates of its usage are problematic, the church of al-Bakhra in northern Syria was also flanked at right angles by an early mosque (Genequand 2004). In addition, the small niche found in the rotunda of the Kathisma church, located between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, suggests a probable Muslim use of a Christian sacred site, since it has been interpreted as a mihrab inserted into the church during the eighth century. Here an apparently functional Christian building was adopted by Muslims, although the exact manner in which the same sacred site may have been converted or shared is far from clear (Avner 2006–2007).

In Jerusalem a different pattern was followed. Although there is significant evidence of the reverence paid by Muslims to Christian holy sites related to the memory of Christ and the Virgin Mary (Bashear 1991; Elad 1995: 131–146), the nucleus of the Islamic settlement in Jerusalem was established over the ruins of the Roman temple, which in turn was erected over those of the Jewish one. The place in which the first nucleus of the al-Aqsa Mosque was erected was known to be the place where the Temple of Solomon once stood. Furthermore, though for a very brief period, at the very beginning Muslims prayed towards Jerusalem as the Jews did, and according to a tradition it was a converted Jew who pointed out the Temple Mount as the future Muslim sacred corner in Jerusalem (Grabar 2006: 36–58).

The Umayyad plan, however, was not the re-erection of the Temple of Solomon but the construction of a complex of buildings serving the Muslim community on a site resonant with earlier associations. Although there are indications that the Umayyad caliph Muʿawiya may have been responsible for some construction on the site as early as the 660s, it was ʿAbd al-Malik who expanded the al-Aqsa Mosque (the congregational mosque of Jerusalem), had a series of commemorative edifices built all around the sacred platform, and erected the Dome of the Rock. In doing so he made the Temple Mount definitively sacred for Muslims. Whatever its earlier associations, it came to be known as the "Noble Esplanade" (al-Haram al-Sharif), and by metonymy Jerusalem started to be described in the Islamic sources as the "Holy House" (Bayt al-Maqdis). The new Islamic quarter established a visual confrontation with the neighboring Christian complex of the Holy Sepulchre, a dialogue reinforced by the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock which, by mixing pious invocations and Qurʾanic quotations, repeatedly assert the absolute sovereignty of God and the role of the Prophet Muhammad as intercessor for the believers on the Day of Judgment, while rejecting the trinity worshipped by Christians (Grabar 2006: 90–96).

The area of al-Haram al-Sharif was provided with a set of memorials aiming at reinforcing the connection of the site with the Prophet Muhammad. From early times, the esplanade became a place of pilgrimage focused on the dome erected around the rock (Necipoğlu 2008: 32–57). The rock over which the dome was built had a grotto accessible from within the building. Inside the grotto, a tiny place of prayer featured a flat mihrab embellished with a round black stone. The presence of a grotto itself belongs to the eastern Mediterranean tradition largely preceding the rise of Islam, in which natural elements and cavities were associated with the signs of divinity on earth. According to the Old and New Testament related traditions, caves were places for prophecy and therefore collectors and dispensers of sacredness and early Islam was not an exception in this regard. The Prophet Muhammad is said by Ibn Ishaq to have received the first bulk of the Revelation while retired to a cave in a mountain nearby Mecca, and he later found shelter in a cave while migrating from Mecca to Medina (Ibn Ishaq 1955: 104–107, 221–231).

As mentioned earlier, in some cases, early Muslims manipulated and transformed existent sacred places. In Damascus a first small mosque was built following the conquest close to the late antique church, thus implementing the pattern of contiguity described above. Later on, however, the Great Mosque built by the caliph al-Walid (r. 705–715) replaced both this primitive mosque and the church, which in turn had been established on the site of a previously pagan temple. The decision undertaken by al-Walid to replace a church with a mosque is quite unusual for the early Islamic period, and this can be explained by the role of Damascus as the capital of a new international empire with universal aspirations, as the Umayyad caliphate had become (Flood 2000: 184–236). One inscription within the Islamic building referred to the destruction of the church, emphasizing that the change in the political rule implied a change in the sacred topography of the empire. However, Muslims also decided to exploit one of the late antique associations with the site which made – from a Christian perspective – the precinct of the church sacred. The church was in fact dedicated to St. John the Baptist a few decades before the Islamic conquest and Muslim texts describing the foundational act of the mosque mention the discovery of a reliquary containing the remains of the saint. The latter was relocated within the prayer hall of the new mosque. As with the mosque and shrine complex in Jerusalem, the Umayyads structured their new sacred place in Damascus around a specific object or natural site, adapting the cultural phenomenon of the cult of relics in Byzantium. The narrative about the discovery of the relics – which, as Khalek has shown (2011: 111–116), was probably informed by the Christian literary tradition of the *inventio* of relics – mentions the approval of the caliph al-Walid to have the remains interred within the prayer hall of the new mosque. This decision expressed the role of Islam as the culmination of older monotheistic religions, a theme repeated in Jerusalem and Mecca.

An interesting feature of the Great Mosque of Damascus is that, with the passing of time, the relics of St. John the Baptist became but one of the locales of sacredness within the building (Flood 2000: 104–106). Following what was done elsewhere (see above), the area corresponding to the mihrab of the primitive Mosque of Damascus, destroyed together with the church to make room for the Mosque of al-Walid, was paid a special reverence (the new mihrab in that area was named "mihrab of the Companions"). This effort was part of a wider strategy which tended to supplement specific places with sacred associations by means of literary traditions and recovery of objects, also a factor in Mecca and Medina (Cobb 2002; Kister 1996). Among several other collated traditions, the pilgrimage guide of al-Harawi (d. 1215) mentions that a fragment of the lance of Khalid ibn al-Walid (d. 642) was set into one of the gates of the Great Mosque of Damascus. He was the general who led the Muslim army to victory over Damascus and Syria; the fragment of his lance was therefore a relic of the victory of Islam, reinforcing the sacredness of the site in which it was hosted (al-Harawi 1957: 40).

A New Decorum for Islamic Sacred Spaces

The sacred spaces encountered by Muslims once they settled in and out of Arabia were highly decorated. Frescoes, glass and gold mosaics, pavement mosaics, marble, sculpted friezes, and informative inscriptions composed the decoration of Christian churches and Jewish synagogues. The Kaʿba, transformed by Muhammad in 630, had frescoes decorating its walls and pillars.

The choice to avoid the representation of living beings in Islamic sacred spaces – exemplified by the Prophet's aforementioned breaking of idols and removal of figurative paintings from the Kaʿba (with the exception of an image of Jesus and Mary) was, however, not entirely new. Among both Christian and Jewish traditions there had previously been contradictory stances on the topic of figurative representations of the divine as well as of living creatures. One point of departure was the injunction to not make any "carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20: 4; Deuteronomy 5: 8). During late antiquity, however, subjects, themes, and motifs circulating since pagan times were included, transformed, and reinvented in Christian art according to circumstance. Figurative images largely invaded Christian sacred spaces either as a consequence of the transposition of Roman imperial iconography to the religious realm or as an effort to translate pagan cultic images into new Christian iconography.

As a consequence of living alongside Christian communities, Jews also deployed figurative subjects in their synagogues, though this practice was challenged by some rabbis. The iconographic cycles included not only Jewish religious symbols (such as the seven-branched candelabrum, palm fronds, citrons, ram's horns) but also narrative scenes depicting bible stories, and figurative images such as the zodiac or the personification of the seasons. The latter subjects were shared with other late antique actors. Two aspects are worth stressing here: the first is the continual process of sharing among religious communities with regard to the visual culture of sacred buildings; the second is the existence of a debate within each monotheistic religious community on the subject of representing figurative images within sacred spaces (Fine 2000).

Within the Byzantine world a turn towards aniconism spread during the sixth century when figurative images were avoided in new ecclesiastic foundations. This included, among others, the decoration of Justinian's Haghia Sophia and Haghia Irene and the Church of St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople, and of some churches founded in territories later conquered by early Islam (Figure 5.4). Particularly remarkable are the cases of the Church of the Monastery of St. Gabriel at Qartmin (512), today in southeast Turkey, and the church built in Sanaa (Yemen) (second quarter of the sixth century). The decoration of both churches was aniconic and their walls were covered with marble veneers and glass mosaics (Mango 1977). The mosaics in the cathedral of Sanaa – known only through the written sources – displayed crosses, stars, and trees. The still visible mosaics in the church in Qartmin display crosses in medallions, vine scrolls sprouting from amphorae, and two ciboria with domes resting on four columns; a partially lost mosaic inscription in both Greek and in Syriac runs below the main panels praising the act of patronage. The absence of any figurative decoration and the simultaneous presence of running inscriptions, phytomorphic motifs, and architectural compositions forecast the choices of early Muslims regarding religious art (Figure 5.5). Before the emergence of prescriptive texts such as the hadith or Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, which are again difficult to date with certainty, buildings such as the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus show the choices made by early Islamic patrons. Sacred spaces under the Umayyads were decorated with the same visual paraphernalia of late antique churches: marble columns and capitals, marble veneers, glass and gilded wall mosaics. Sparkling and luminous effects were sought through luxurious materials and techniques. Despite the adoption of a nonfigurative repertoire, the visual vocabulary chosen included monumental inscriptions, realistic and imaginary representations of nature and architecture, geometrical patterns, jewels, and jeweled containers. Although such elements were widely in use in late antiquity, early Muslims selected, appropriated, and developed just some of them in a distinctive and original way (Flood 2012: 253–254; Grabar 1987).

Arabic was used for the inscriptions and a new specific script provided with precise proportions and a geometric layout called Kufic became the canon for official texts with both a religious and political content (see George, CHAPTER 4). In the Dome of the Rock the Kufic inscription in mosaic, dated 692, is rendered with gold tesserae on a blue-green background. Tesserae vary in size and this is reflected in the ductus (the individual strokes comprising the letter), made from three to five tesserae, whose thickness dictates the proportions among the letters and in the layout (George 2010: 60–68). At such an early date, then, the Umayyad patrons intertwined the visual qualities of luxurious wall mosaics with the notion of monumental inscriptions displaying publicly their choice to make Arabic the language of the new empire. In order to contextualize this decision, it is worth noticing that single-line continuous Greek inscriptions were common in sixth-century Byzantium. Though the decoration of main churches in the eastern

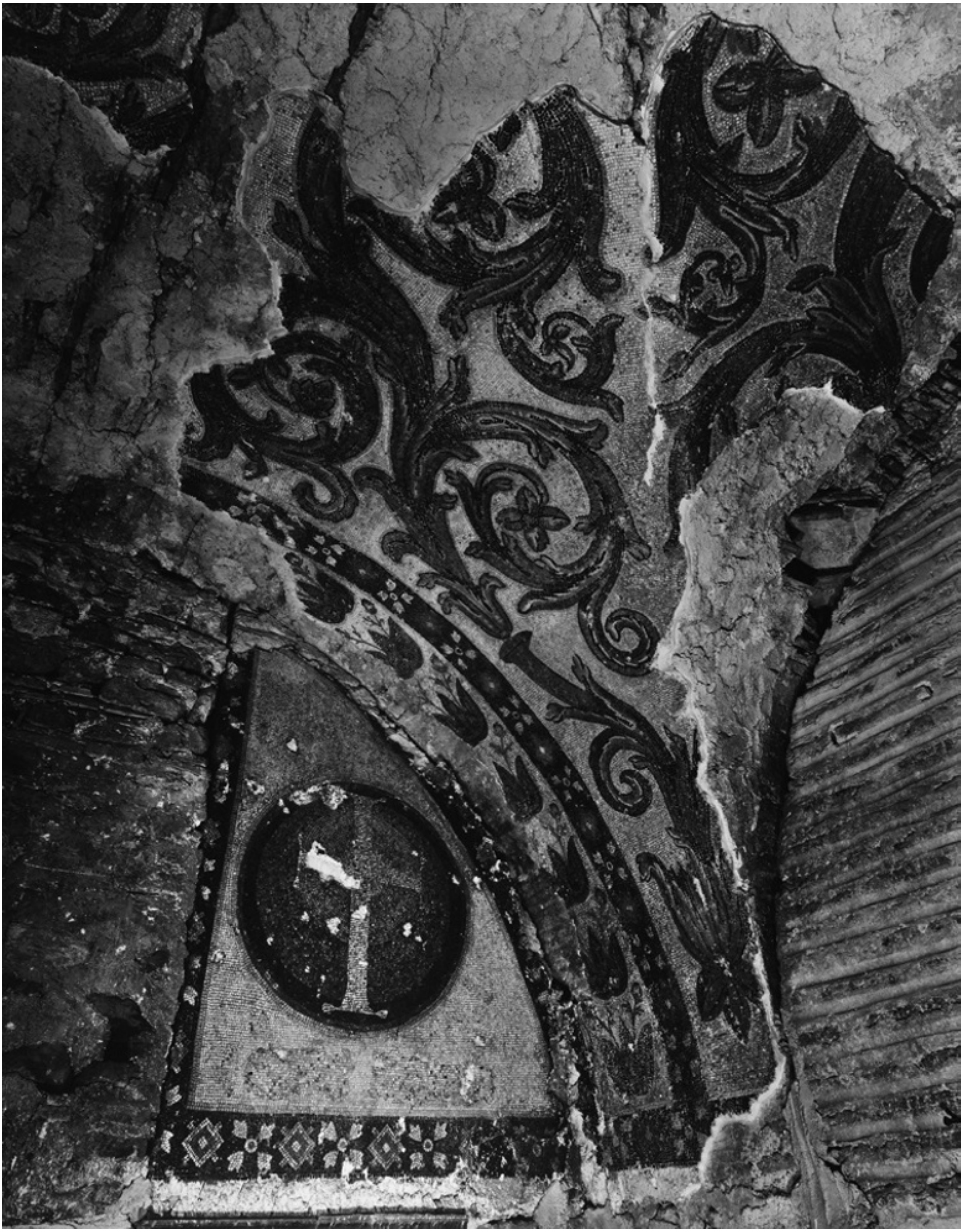

FIGURE 5.4 Wall mosaics rinceaux, narthex, Church of Haghia Sophia, Istanbul. Source: The Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks Fieldwork Records and Papers, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, DC [MS.BZ.004-HS.BIA.1240]. Reproduced with permission.

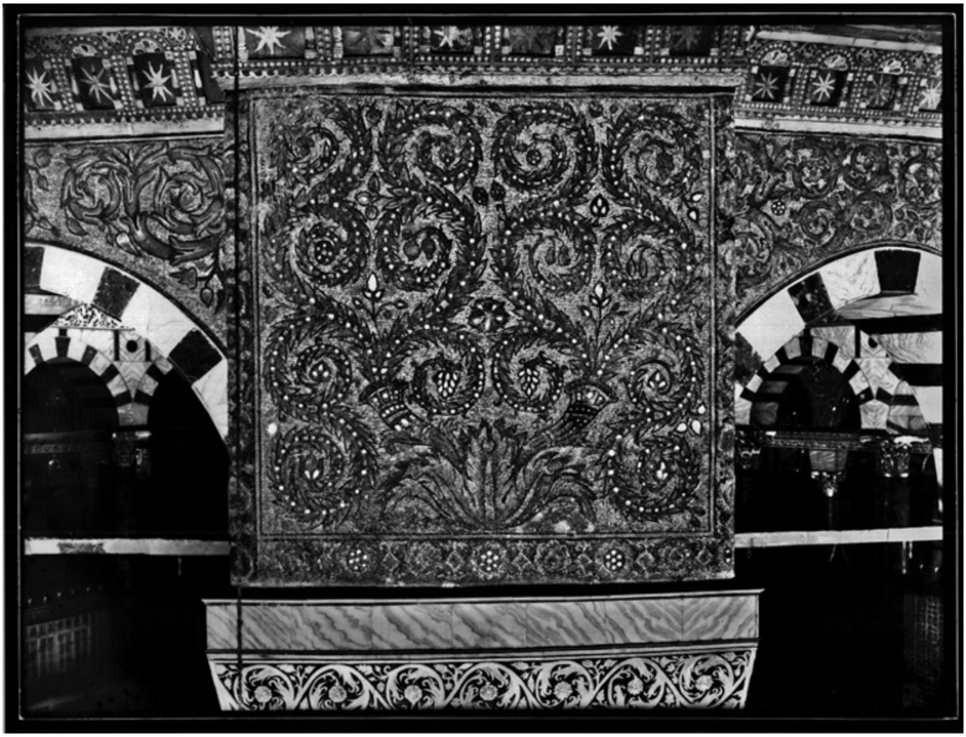

FIGURE 5.5 Wall mosaic rinceaux, outer façade of the inner octagon, Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, 692. Source: Dome of the Rock, Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford [EA.CA.196].

Mediterranean provinces is not known in detail, Constantinople offers good examples. This is the case with the inscription in the centrally planned church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus (527–536) chiseled in marble and colored in gold on a blue background and of the mosaic inscription flanked by vegetal scrolls displayed on the walls of the church of Haghia Irene, which is dated to the rebuilding of the church after a mid-eighth-century earthquake (Van Millingen 1912). Another Greek inscription executed in the same way, in gold against a blue ground, was found in the Church of St. Polyeuktos.

The late antique Mediterranean provided the visual repertoire for the decorative program of the Great Mosque of Damascus, in which marble veneers and wall mosaics play a great role. The mosaics of the mosque, partially devastated by a great fire in 1893, portray an architectural landscape interspersed with luxurious natural elements. The depiction of architecture was quite common in late antique churches. Architecture was used to portray the sacred geography that the community praying in the church felt it belonged to: vignettes depicting a local urban network and major holy cities appear in the pavement mosaics of churches throughout the Syrian region (Duval 1999). Some of these compositions seem to have been translated into the mosaics of the mosque, although the styles of architecture in the Damascus mosaics differ from that of the urban ensembles depicted in earlier floor mosaics from the region (such as those of the mid-eighth-century Church of St. Stephen at Umm al-Rasas). The mosaics of the Damascus mosque display echoes of earlier classicism not in their style but in their use of classical architectural representations such as pavilions, monumental niches, quasi-theatrical wings, gables, and colonnades. Although less numerous than mosaic pavements, the late antique wall mosaics of churches show how classical architecture was often chosen to depict the solemn background for holy figures and religious texts or heavenly evocations. The rotunda of Thessaloniki, the already mentioned mosaics in the monastery of Mar Gabriel, and the mosaics of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem (which are a medieval remake of earlier seventh-century mosaics) all use classicizing architecture to glorify the subjects that they frame. Classicizing architecture, with its imperial and celestial connotations, was also followed to frame the Canon Tables in Gospel manuscripts. Similar motifs were selectively chosen and readapted in Umayyad religious mosaics not because of any direct relation to "real" architecture, or because of any "renaissance" or "revival" of antiquity, but rather because of the ideal of magnificence it was thought to convey to beholders throughout late antiquity. The ubiquitous addition of suspended pearls in the mosaics of Damascus might have added further supernatural connotations as this motif was related to the representation of heavenly cities in late antique and Byzantine art (Flood 2012: 251–252).

The favored artistic media in early Islamic religious art were, therefore, luxurious marble veneers, openwork marble window frames, rare colored marble columns, highly decorated capitals, and glass and gold wall mosaics. Continuing a late antique taste and comparable to contemporary Latin texts, medieval written sources from within the Islamic world were inclined to highlight those artistic features which provoked bewilderment in the beholders for their technical qualities, economic value, and the inaccessible regions of materials or makers' provenance. As highlighted by Flood (2000: 57–68), such was the case of the "karma," a gilded marble frieze running around the prayer hall of the Great Mosque of Damascus, consisting of an acanthus scroll with pomegranates and bunches of grapes, said to have been enormously expensive.

When considered from the point of view of the proscriptions and rulings found in sacred texts and promoted by theologians, early Islamic religious art seems to have elicited two different discourses. The first was about the status of images representing living beings: every subject provided with a soul was suspicious. The allegation was that the maker of such an image was undertaking the sin of hubris: creating a likeness of a living being was in fact claiming for himself one of the divine qualities of God. This is why in the hadith literature the maker of images is often threatened with being punished for uselessly trying to give "real" life to images. In the background of such a position was the widespread belief among late antique and early medieval societies that certain objects contained the potential to be “real”; for this reason, ancient statues of pagan gods as well as certain images of Christian holy figures were considered to have the potential to affect the human course of events, when activated by formulae recited by a presiding official (Freedberg 1989: 82–98). Although this potential for images was officially rejected by early Islamic theology, it nevertheless circulated among the population. The second discourse concerned the use of vast quantities of money to embellish mosques with images and ornament (Flood, forthcoming). This focused on the belief that modesty was praised by the Prophet Muhammad, who is told to have said that money would have been better spent on the well-being of Muslims than on buildings. The holy text of the Qur’an too blames the accumulation of goods (Q. IX: 34–35). A related concern was that excessively decorated sacred spaces would distract worshippers, directing their attention away from the main focus, an unrepresentable God. Furthermore, according to some opponents of the Umayyad dynasty, materials such as marble, glass, and gold made mosques similar to churches.

The rise of Islam meant that a series of strategies were implemented to augment the locales of sacred spaces and a variety of positions and factional as well as regional distinctions developed. Because the early Islamic polity was one in which Muslims were but a tiny minority, many choices in the making of both a sacred landscape and a distinct religious artistic language were related to the surrounding context. As regards the decoration of sacred spaces under the Umayyads, on the one hand the fear was that by making mosques look like churches, Islam would have been watered down as simply a modest spin-off of much stronger former monotheistic traditions. On the other hand, the alleged modesty and poverty of early Islamic times, memorialized in textual traditions, was soon felt to be inadequate to express the beliefs of the masters of an empire now stretching from the Atlantic shores to those of the Indus River.

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Part II

Abbasids and the Universal Caliphate (750–900)

The overthrow of the Umayyad caliphate by the Abbasids (750–1258), who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad's uncle, ʿAbbas, heralded what is generally believed to be the "golden age" of Islamic art and architecture. The foundation of Baghdad as the Abbasid capital in 762, close to the former Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon, inaugurated Iraq as the cultural center of the Islamic world, a position that it retained until the extirpation of the last Abbasid caliph by the Mongols in 1258. This despite the many political vicissitudes that the Abbasid dynasty was to suffer from the ninth century onwards.

The study of Islamic art and architecture during this period is profoundly inhibited by the lack of a single surviving monument from early Islamic Baghdad; what we know of the city is largely derived from texts which are often ambiguous or imprecise in their descriptions. We are fortunate that the Abbasid caliphs tried, on several occasions, to move their capitals elsewhere. In each case these new or expanded foundations failed to replace Baghdad, with which they coexisted. Their failure meant that these alternative imperial centers were soon abandoned, leaving them open to modern archaeological investigation rarely possible in successful cities, which are densely populated and continuously occupied. From 796, the northern Syrian city of Raqqa became the seat of the fabled Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809), while he was engaged with consolidating the western frontier of his empire against Byzantium and establishing closer control over Syria. After a return to Baghdad in 809, in 836 a new capital was built at Samarra on the banks of the Tigris River, 80 miles to the north, reportedly in order to contain the unruly Turkic soldiery of the caliphs within cantons segregated from the Iraqi populace. This capital too was abandoned by the end of the century, when the court returned to Baghdad, leaving the ruins of Samarra available for excavation, from which much of our knowledge of the development of ninth-century Abbasid architecture comes.

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While at the time of its foundation Baghdad was a circular city, a tightly controlled form of cosmogram with the palace of the caliphs at its center, Samarra sprawled for 22 miles along the east bank of the Tigris, its palaces, mosques, polo grounds, race courses (one clover-leaved), and markets linked by a wide avenue that ran north–south. With the Friday mosque no longer attached to the caliphal palace, unlike precedents in Umayyad Damascus and early Abbasid Bagdad, spectacular ceremonial parades were now staged along this main artery. The vast palaces of Samarra and their pavilions set in gardens with pools were sites for the performance of elaborate courtly and quasi-public spectacles, including displays intended to impress visiting embassies, whose receptions are documented in contemporary texts. This aspect of Samarra and its subsequent impact on the development of royal cities is examined by Alastair Northedge, whose chapter in this section compares early Islamic urbanism during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods.

The monuments of Samarra were constructed rapidly from mud brick, with baked brick reserved only for privileged structures. Marble panels, columns, and glass mosaic were used more sparingly than in Umayyad Syria, neither being part of the repertoire of Sasanian art that had flourished earlier in the region. Instead, there was a heavy reliance on carved and molded stucco, a medium favored in Sasanian architecture that had already been adopted in the Umayyad palaces of Syria. The architectural forms and modes of ornament developed in Samarra (or perhaps even earlier in Baghdad, although we lack any material evidence) set the tone for the subsequent development of Islamic art and architecture across the Islamic world, from the Maghrib and al-Andalus in the west to Afghanistan and Central Asia in the east. Distinctive characteristics of Abbasid architecture and ornament in Samarra are analyzed in Marcus Milwright's chapter, in the light of new archaeological evidence.

The so-called Samarra horizon is marked by the reproduction and repetition across the Islamic world of formal relationships or ornamental modes that are believed to have first appeared in Samarra, if not earlier in Baghdad: these include the positioning of a single tower minaret on axis in congregational mosques, and modes of abstract ornament in stucco, wood, and (more rarely) marble. The powerful impact of Samarra held true even for those who rejected Abbasid overlordship, among them the rebellious Abbasid governor of Egypt, Ahmad ibn Tulun (r. 868–884), a Turkic slave-soldier, who was raised in Samarra and built a new capital in Egypt, which was popularly referred to as "Samarra on the Nile" because of its resemblance to the Abbasid prototype. Only Ibn Tulun's mosque of 879 survives to attest to the truth of this perception, its formal elements and ornament clearly inspired by those of Abbasid Samarra.

One further major development during this period was the emergence of luster ceramics, a type of ceramic characterized by its lustrous metallic surface sheen, whose production entails a complex double-firing procedure. The export of Abbasid luster vessels and tiles from Iraq constitutes another aspect of the "Samarra horizon." This development represents an adaptation from earlier traditions of glass production; its epicenter seems to have been Basra in the Gulf, providing the Abbasid ceramicists with easy access to transregional trade routes, which assumed a paramount importance during this period. An unusual wealth of contemporary textual documentation attests to the intensity and volume of maritime trade contacts between Abbasid Iraq, Sind, peninsular India, and even China during the ninth and tenth centuries. These include extraordinary tales of the marvelous and wonders (*ʿajaʾib*) collected from or written by those who had made the long and arduous voyage to India and China. Excavations of trade emporia on the west coast of India have provided concrete evidence for these contacts, including fragments of Abbasid luster vessels imported from Iraq, and even fragmentary Abbasid coins (dirhams). Underwater archaeology and shipwrecks have yielded further clues about the vibrancy of the China–Abbasid ceramics trade, a maritime horizon that complemented Eurasian networks of inland waterways and overland trade routes that are discussed in Hsueh-man Shen's chapter.

In addition to luster, ceramics with opaque high-tin glazes and painted cobalt designs developed in Iraq were exported as far as China, and seem to have inspired early experiments with the blue and white wares that would later come to be seen as characteristically Chinese. In Iraq itself, contacts with China inspired the adoption of paper in the Abbasid chancery as early as the eighth century, although it would be another two centuries before the medium was adopted for the production of copies of the Qurʾan. These long-distance circulations of artifacts, commodities, and technical knowledge constitute an under-acknowledged phase in proto-histories of globalization. The imbrications between the Abbasid court and these long-distance trade networks is underlined by the fact that some of the materials used in the palaces of Samarra, including the tropical hardwoods (primarily teak), were imported to Iraq, probably from India, along these very networks. Likewise, ninth-century Iraqi luster ceramic tiles imported for the palace of the vassal Aghlabid governor of North Africa, but later set around the mihrab of the Great Mosque of Qayrawan in Tunisia, testify to internal long-distance connections within the caliphal territories, reflecting the substantial cultural impact of Baghdad.

6

Early Islamic Urbanism

Alastair Northedge

It is a well-known phenomenon that at the end of antiquity, the ordered structure of the Roman cities of the east disappeared and was replaced by narrow winding streets and crowded markets with tiny booths (Bennison and Gascoigne 2007; Kennedy 1985). The grids of streets were abandoned and the broad colonnaded avenues filled in with shops and houses. This process is not to be described as a decline, rather a change of needs. Indeed it could be described as a return to the practices of the Ancient Near East. Certainly, it was significant that wheeled vehicles were no longer used; instead the camel was a much more flexible method of transport than a cart. The process is not necessarily linked to the appearance of Islam as a religion in the seventh century; some elements can be already identified up to three centuries earlier. The grid plans of Roman cities were laid out in the first to third centuries, on the Hellenistic plan, and simple usage and rebuilding led to disorganization of the plan.

A second factor in these changes is that the Islamic state was centered on the continental Middle East, whereas Rome was centered on the Mediterranean. Needs changed and numerous Roman cities were slowly abandoned. As a result many fine Roman city sites are still available to be excavated, and have been. Others, such as Damascus, have remained great centers; however, they were slowly transformed over a number of centuries.

New cities were also required. At the beginning of Islam, they were patterned after the needs of Arabia, but that slowly changed when the caliphate was transferred to Damascus in 661 and then to Baghdad in 762. As everywhere at the time, old cities died slowly and continued long after their function had disappeared.

One should not forget that in the Middle East many cities are founded in hostile desert or steppic terrain for particular reasons, such as commerce, religious, or political needs. For the commercial side, one can quote Palmyra in Syria or Siraf

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in Iran; on the political side, Samarra in Iraq. When their function is finished, so is the city, and it is largely abandoned, leaving the small settlement which had existed before and exists today.

In fact, new Early Islamic cities were often planned with grids of streets, at least those founded by members of the state, after the initial period (Denoix 2008). It was a world of personal dependence, dependant on the wishes of the prince. That can be seen in the plans. If the urban foundation survived the life of the founder, then it became a traditional organic city. If not, the settlement was abandoned and we have the site to excavate, as at ʿAnjar in Lebanon.

It should be remarked, incidentally, that it is not uncommon in the world of Islamic architecture to call large palatial complexes "royal cities," see, for example, Marianne Barrucand's *Urbanisme princier en Islam*, which deals with three enormous palace complexes – the Safavid complex in Isfahan, the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, and Meknes in Morocco – which, however, lack the essential urban element of housing (Barrucand 1985). This point serves to remind us that the urban form was not the only one used for palace complexes in the Islamic world. Often the complexes are composed of agglomerations of palatial buildings adjoined to an existing city but without extensive accommodation for servants or soldiers.

Pre-Islamic Urbanism in Arabia

It is now generally accepted that the origins of Islamic urbanism lay in the Arabian Peninsula (Whitcomb 1996). In particular in the North and Central Arabian tribal culture, within whose boundaries Mecca and Medina lay. Around the coasts of the Arabian Peninsula, many outside influences occurred – from Sasanian Iran, Ethiopia, and Byzantium (see Finster, CHAPTER 2). Inner Arabia was not, however, heavily influenced from the outside. At the same time as the decline of the incense trade in the second century CE and after, major changes in society took place, including the reorganization of the tribes and the appearance of the Arabic language as such. The urban form that appeared was highly distinctive. Although not well preserved, the two sites of ed-Dur in Umm al-Qaiwain (UAE) and Mleiha in Sharjah (UAE) have revealed from the second century CE fields of widely separated buildings, with an elite who lived in forts or castles, and interred their camels in elaborate burials (Lecomte 1993). It is not known how the land between the widely spaced solid buildings was used – perhaps for animals, perhaps for agriculture, perhaps for reed huts (*barasti*) which have not survived. At Mleiha, the new form replaced an earlier closely built-up city. This is not the culture of the South Arabian civilization, where built-up cities continued until Islam (Schiettecatte 2009), and one good example is al-Ukhdud, at Najran in Saudi Arabia. In particular, although little studied, the site of the city of al-Hira in Iraq, the capital of the Arab Lakhmid kings, vassals to the Sasanians in Iran, has this form of scattered mounds, excavated by Talbot-Rice in the 1930s. There, many of the mounds turned out to contain the remains of Monophysite churches. Since then, the difficult situation in Iraq has prevented further exploration of al-Hira, though a new mission is now active. At the time of the Prophet's life, Yathrib (later to become Medina) was of this type, separated settlements scattered in the palm plantations with no specific center. This model of settlement may reflect a multitribal organization; certainly this was true at Medina, where the Prophet found seven tribes without any central government.

A variant is the site of Qaryat al-Faw, the capital of the kings of Kinda, northeast of Najran, where a small unwalled urban settlement sits at the entrance of a castle, with a temple, reception halls, and royal tombs. Ansary interpreted the square building as a fortified market, but it is obvious from the parallels that it was only a market in its last period, and was earlier a fortified elite residence (Ansary 1982; Northedge 2009). Very similar in character to the settlements around some of the Umayyad desert castles, such as Jabal Says in Syria, the site was abandoned in the fourth century CE. It was probably the settlement of a single lineage unit and thus similar to Mecca, where the sanctuary of the Kaʿba was the property of a single tribe – the Quraysh.

The new element that the Prophet added, after the migration from Mecca, was a central administration. In the case of Medina, he established his house and the mosque together in a single unit (see Guidetti, CHAPTER 5). Evidently, all traces of the early plan in Medina have disappeared, and we have to reconstruct the organization from the texts. The Prophet's house became the main place of prayer, but there were also nine tribal mosques. In addition there was a *musalla*, an open air praying place outside the city for the festival prayers of the two *ʿIds* (religious festivals) established southwest of the city in the territory of Banu Salima. This practice of praying outside the city for the festival prayers is projected as the origin of the *musalla*s of later Islamic cities.

The house of the Prophet – apart from the courtyard used for prayers – also included four *bayt*s for his wives, that is, apartments of several rooms with palm-branch partitions, and "chambers" (*hujra*) for other women of the entourage. This arrangement of mosque–residence in Medina is probably at the origin of the early administrative cores of Islamic cities, where the governor's palace was placed behind the qibla wall of the mosque (Johns 1999). At least, the textual descriptions of the Prophet's house in Medina present an almost identical situation to that in the early palaces whose remains are known.

The Early *Amsar*

With the success of the conquests of Syria in 634–636, and Iraq in 637, the question arose of how to settle the troops in the captured territories – troops who were then to furnish the forces for extending the conquests further. The texts present the issue as the decadence of existing cities, and the necessity to maintain contact with the caliph in Medina. In general, it was decided to settle them in new cities, called *misr* (pl. *amsar*). The first two were in Iraq, Basra and Kufa, both founded in 17 (638). Old Basra was located at the modern town of al-Zubayr, west of modern Basra, and much of it remains an open archaeological site, but it has been little excavated (al-ʿAzzawi 1994). It was divided into five tribal quarters in the early period, and the site of the mosque is known.

Kufa is much better known from the texts (Djait 1986), but since a modern town exists there over the top of it, only the site of the mosque and governor's palace is known archaeologically. The site was located on the north side of the Lakhmid capital of al-Hira, and can be considered a suburb of it, though it quickly replaced al-Hira. In its initial form, there was a central square with a mosque with a prayer hall with reused columns from al-Hira. Although Creswell thought there was a ditch around the mosque (Creswell 1969: 24, fig. 14), Antun thinks that the ditch surrounded the central square, separating it from the cantonments around (Antun 2016: 207). Thus the courtyard of the mosque was the central square, which was also used for the main market. There was a residence for the governor separated by a roadway. In 670, the Umayyad governor Ziyad b. Abi Sufyan rebuilt the mosque in fired brick, and the governor's palace (*Qasr al-Imara* – elsewhere more generally *Dar al-Imara*) was moved adjacent to the qibla wall. Although some have objected (Johns 1999: 111), it seems likely that the present remains are those of 670, in their origin. Stylistically, the remains are archaic. Only the qibla wall of the early mosque exists today – a fired brick enclosure with half-round buttresses, 103 m per side (200 cubits) – and the interior is new. Between 1938 and 1956, the Directorate-General of Antiquities excavated the *Qasr al-Imara*, finding a palace with a double enclosure. In the interior enclosure, there is a four-iwan (open vaulted hall) plan with a main iwan with a vault supported on columns in the Sasanian style, surrounded by apartments, much rebuilt later on. According to the archaeologists, the mosque and palace are bonded, but only in the second phase. Probably what was taken as the first phase was in fact the foundation (Northedge in press).

According to the texts, the city was unwalled, and at the end of the Umayyad period there were 15 avenues dividing the tribal quarters (*manahij*). It is unlikely that the plan was orthogonal, as suggested by Djait. One supposes that, situated adjacent to al-Hira, it followed a similar arrangement but with the addition of the central public area which survives today, borrowed from Medina of the time of the Prophet. The problem of Kufa was that large numbers of tribal fragments immigrated; no doubt seeking paid employment as *muqatila* (fighters) for the further conquests. So one has the image of a large number of small tribal leaders, surrounded by the houses of their followers, all paid for by the state. No doubt the free spaces found were filled with the mud-brick houses of the followers. The result was quite unstable. There were many revolts, including that of Imam al-Husayn, the son of ʿAli b. Abi Talib, in 680, and the revolts were only suppressed by the brutal Umayyad governor, al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf al-Thaqafi, when he demobilized the Iraqi fighters in the reign of the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705). Nevertheless the Abbasid conspiracy started there and led to the revolution of 750 that toppled the Umayyad dynastic state. Even then Kufa continued to be important, until the rise of Najaf in the tenth century with its tomb of the Prophet's son-in-law ʿAli b. Abi Talib, 11 km to the west.

The third *misr* of importance was Fustat in Egypt, the ancestor of Cairo. Here the tribal quarters were distributed north and south of the mosque of ʿAmr, the conqueror of Egypt. Under the later Fatimid construction, very little of early Fustat is preserved. However, Gayraud has been able to excavate the only part of a seventh-century *misr* revealed by archaeologists in the outlying sector of Istabl Antar: narrow irregular lanes with small mud-brick buildings (Gayraud 1998).

Jabiya in southern Syria was first proposed as a *misr*, but the idea was then abandoned. Later, Syria remained an exception among the provinces of the caliphate and the army was not settled in a single garrison city but rather divided among the five military provinces (Ar. *jund*, pl. *ajnad*) of Dimashq, Urdunn, Filastin, Hims, and Qinnasrin. Nevertheless, the model of the *misr*, as the garrison, continued to spread at Qayrawan in Tunisia (670s), and at Merv in Turkmenistan, although in that case the army was settled throughout the Merv oasis.

New Urban Settlements of Umayyad Syria

There is a second category of new city: the "new urban settlements" of Umayyad Syria. Inverted commas are used, because these sites generally have urban characteristics, and frequently the texts call them *madina* (city), but as one can easily see, it is not a question of traditional cities, and Grabar called them "quasi-urban" (Grabar *et al.* 1978: 79). Some dispute whether they were constructions of the elite. For example, Whitcomb sees the site excavated at Aqaba as a *misr* (Whitcomb 1994), that is, a garrison city divided into tribal quarters. A few moments' reflection, however, will show that the sites in this category with their orthogonal plans and monumental construction were not the product of development by tribal groups but were designed for a patron. The site at Aqaba began as one of these sites and then developed into a natural city.

There are five sites concerned, together with Ramla in Israel, of which little is known archaeologically: ʿAnjar (Lebanon), Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Syria), Madinat al-Far (Syria), Aqaba, and the citadel of Amman (Jordan). The first four are characterized by rectangular plans of different sizes, fortified with half-round towers, and the last by an irregular fortification with square towers, irregular because of its location on the citadel hill in Amman. All have, or would have if they were sufficiently excavated, a fortification, palace, mosque, streets, shops, bath, and a group of houses. Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi may be somewhat exceptional in that the palace was located outside the enclosure of the "city" (the Large Enclosure) in a typical desert castle form. We interpret here Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi in the way proposed in Northedge 1994, which appears to be generally accepted now: that the Small Enclosure is an Umayyad castle, and the Large Enclosure is the "city," as indicated in the inscription from the mosque.

The classic example is ʿAnjar, an almost square enclosure, 310 × 370 m, with four colonnaded streets meeting at a central tetrapylon, dated *c.* 96 (714) (Figure 6.1) (Chehab 1993). There are three palaces (one unfinished), a mosque, two baths, shops on the colonnaded streets, and the remainder of the plan is filled

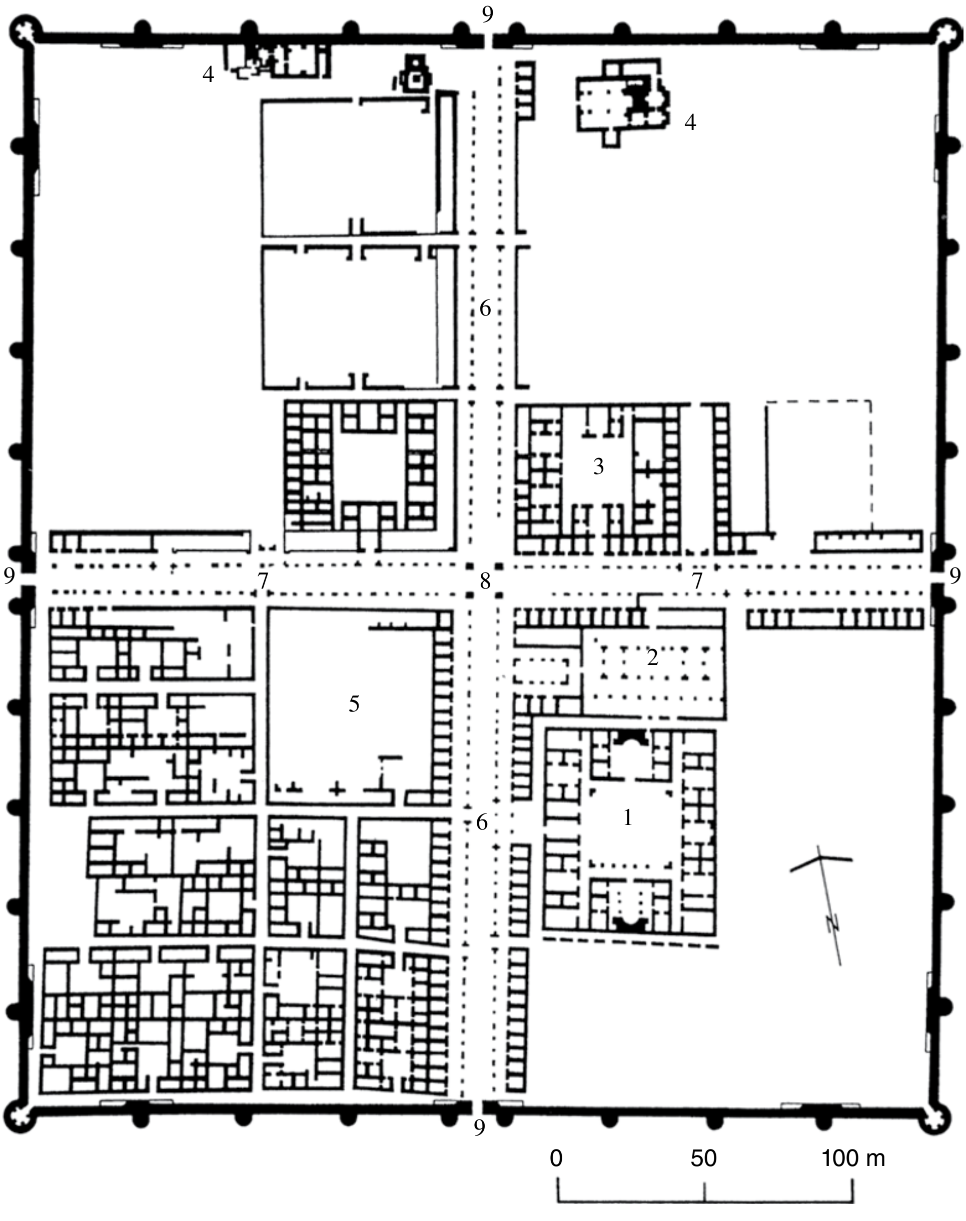

FIGURE 6.1 Umayyad city of ʿAnjar, Lebanon, 714: 1. and 3. palaces, 2. mosque, 4. bathhouses, 5. zone of housing, 6. and 7. colonnaded avenues, 8. tetrapylon, 9. gates. Source: Samarra Archaeological Survey. Reproduced with permission.

with courtyard houses. The fortifications are also typical of the Umayyad period in having half-round solid towers and three-quarter round hollow towers on the corners (Northedge 2008). The site was abandoned shortly after construction, and thus retains its original plan.

The known variations on this plan are mainly of size: the small rectangular enclosure at Madinat al-Far has approximately the same dimensions, 340 × 320 m. The site at the Jordanian coastal city of Aqaba is smaller, 165 × 140 m, but the original plan, in as far as it is possible to detect it under the later occupation, was similar, for there were four streets and a tetrapylon at the center (Whitcomb 1994). The Large Enclosure at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi measures 163 × 163 m, and contains an evolved internal plan of a central colonnaded square, four axial streets, and buildings including a mosque placed around the square, dated 110 (728) (Genequand 2012; Grabar *et al.* 1978).

In terms of chronological spread, Whitcomb dates the foundation of Aqaba in the time of the third caliph ʿUthman b. ʿAffan, between 23 (644) and 35 (656), for a text source refers to the *mawali* (clients) of ʿUthman living there (Whitcomb 1994). This is an exceptional dating, for other monumental construction is not known so early. The date is more likely to be closer to the others, in the early second (eighth) century. ʿAnjar seems to have been built about 96 (714), Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi in 110 (728), and the citadel of Amman *c.* 117 (735).

These sites are called "urban settlements" by translation of the Arabic *madina*. The term *madina* is found in the foundation inscription of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, and in a text reference to ʿAnjar (Brooks 1898: 51). Madinat al-Far is identified with the residence of the son of an Umayyad caliph Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik, who died in 738, which was called Hisn Maslama. The expression *hisn* (castle) may also have been used for Amman, for a *qasida* (poem) of the Umayyad poet al-Ahwas al-Ansari (d. 705) refers to *hisn ʿAmman*, "the castle or fort of Amman." *Hisn* occurs in connection with Umayyad and pre-Islamic castles in Arabia. *Madina* evidently is the term employed today for a city. At the beginning of Islam, it was most famously used to denominate the "city of the Prophet" (*madinat rasul allah*). Kister remarked a hadith where the Prophet's wife ʿA'isha accuses the first Umayyad caliph Muʿawiya: "you have built up [Mecca] as 'cities' and 'castles'" (*fa-banaytaha madaʾina wa-qusuran*) (Kister 1972: 88–89).

Whatever the origins of this kind of urban settlement, one can say that the components are not very different from those of the complexes of the desert castles, the country residences of the Umayyad elite. Anjar possesses the same elements as Jabal Says, a complex of castle, mosque, bath, and house, but it is presented in an urban aspect with fortifications and an orthogonal plan. Amman is similar to ʿAnjar but with a less regular plan. The close integration of castle complex and *madina* can be seen at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, where the group of houses and mosque are simply built together on a square plan.

If there is a difference, it is one of scale: there are more houses in the *madina*s than in the desert castle complexes. This is a proportional differentiation which can be seen again in the Abbasid period at Samarra. As discussed below, at Samarra some cantonments (*qataʾiʿ*) had a residence and a large number of houses, and others were limited to the residence alone. There the distinction is nearly always connected with the settlement of the military, though it seems that huntsmen and palace servants were settled in the same way.

There is some evidence that the *madina*s of the Umayyad period were also connected with military settlement. Anjar was probably built by ʿAbbas b. al-Walid, the son of the caliph Walid I and a general active in the Byzantine wars at the time of the construction. He was closely associated with his aforementioned uncle Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik, the commander at the siege of Constantinople in 716–718, and the builder of Hisn Maslama (Haase 1990). The citadel of Amman is best interpreted as the residence of the governor of the Balqaʾ and the *jund al-Balqaʾ*, which is known in the history of al-Tabari (d. 923). Nevertheless not all *madina*s were destined for the military. Ramla, as founded by Sulayman b. ʿAbd al-Malik before his accession to the caliphate in 715, had no particular military connotation: Sulayman was governor of Filastin (Luz 1997).

Rather the construction of the new urban settlements should be connected with a phenomenon of the later Umayyad period mentioned by Crone (1980). That is, that leaders of the period gathered personal entourages of vassals (*mawali*) and soldiers who could support their lord in war, particularly in the civil war of 744. Another Sulayman, son of the caliph Hisham, commanded a regiment of *mawali*, the Dhakwaniyya, of 3000 men. Other such entourages numbered from 30 to 150 men (Northedge 1994).

It is striking that none of the *madina*s were founded by a reigning caliph who was closely associated with the capital Damascus. ʿAbd al-Malik's son Sulayman only became caliph during the construction of Ramla. Rather *madina*s were built by members of the Umayyad family of the highest level below the caliph, men who could be expected to have followings of substantial size. The way in which they were built is described by the text of al-Baladhuri (d. 892) on the foundation of Ramla:

> Al-Walid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik appointed Sulayman ibn ʿAbd al-Malik governor of *jund Filastin*, and he (Sulayman) settled in Ludd. Then he founded the city of al-Ramla (*madinat al-Ramla*), and made it a *misr* (*massaraha*). The first that was built of it was his palace (*qasr*) and the house known as *Dar al-Sabbaghin* (House of the Dyers), and he placed a cistern centrally in the house. Then he marked out a plan for the mosque, and built it, but he succeeded to the Caliphate before its completion; then there was later construction in it during his caliphate. Then ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz completed it, and reduced the original plan … When Sulayman had built for himself, he gave permission to the people for construction, and they built; and he dug for the people of al-Ramla their canal which is called Barada, and he dug wells. (al-Baladhuri 1866: 143)

The patron took in hand the laying out of the city (*ikhtitat*), the construction of the mosque and his own palace, and the provision of water, but the construction of houses was left to the inhabitants.

Evidently some of the *madinas* were abandoned at an early date, but their plan is well preserved, for example, ʿAnjar, where there is very little reconstruction. Others became organic cities and continued to develop. Aqaba is an archaeological example of this transition. The Roman–Byzantine town was abandoned and occupation concentrated in the new settlement. At Ramla, the new city was built close to Ludd, and eventually replaced it. This type of transition is important because the character and reasons for the original foundation were evidently different from the later development. The evident characteristic of these Umayyad sites is that they exploit Roman–Byzantine urban architecture (Hillenbrand 1999). However, they depend upon an idea which originated in Arabia. In the course of the Umayyad caliphate, society became less and less tribal, but quasi-tribal personal followings remained.

Baghdad and the Abbasids

Once in power, after 750, the Abbasids built a series of new capitals – two called al-Hashimiyya (after their dynastic ancestor), whose sites remain unknown – before Abu Jaʿfar al-Mansur founded Baghdad in 762–766. Baghdad, formally Madinat al-Salam (City of Peace), was laid out in a way that developed from the *amsar*. At the center, on the west bank of the Tigris, was the caliph's circular city, called Madinat Abi Jaʿfar (known to us as the Round City). To the south of it lay the market area of al-Karkh. According to the sources, this only became the market area after the merchants were expelled from the Round City (Lassner 1970a: 60–62). However, as is evident from the name, al-Karkh, a Syriac word meaning "fortified city" (*Karkhe*), al-Karkh must have been a small pre-Islamic town, outside which the Round City was built. From the four gates of the Round City, the four Grand Avenues extended into the suburbs (*rabad*, pl. *arbad*). The suburbs were divided into four quarters (*arbaʿ*), and each was governed by an associate of al-Mansur. There was a further Grand Avenue (*shariʿ aʿzam*) on the Tigris. From 769 onwards, the heir of al-Mansur, al-Mahdi, came back from Rayy in Iran, and settled on the east bank of the Tigris in al-Rusafa, in a typical arrangement where the eldest son had his own establishment.

The new element in the plan, apart from the fact that the quarters were no longer divided by tribe, was the Round City (Figure 6.2), famous for being circular, with the mosque and the caliph's palace placed in the center. No archaeological trace of it has been discovered, but the textual descriptions are quite detailed, in the *Kitab al-Buldan* of al-Yaʿqubi, and the topographical introduction of the *Taʾrikh Baghdad* of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (Lassner 1970a). The unconfirmed plan was first reconstructed by Herzfeld, and then corrected by Lassner, from the textual sources without much reference to archaeological evidence (Lassner 1970b). Two imitations of the Round City exist: al-Rafiqa, the Abbasid city at

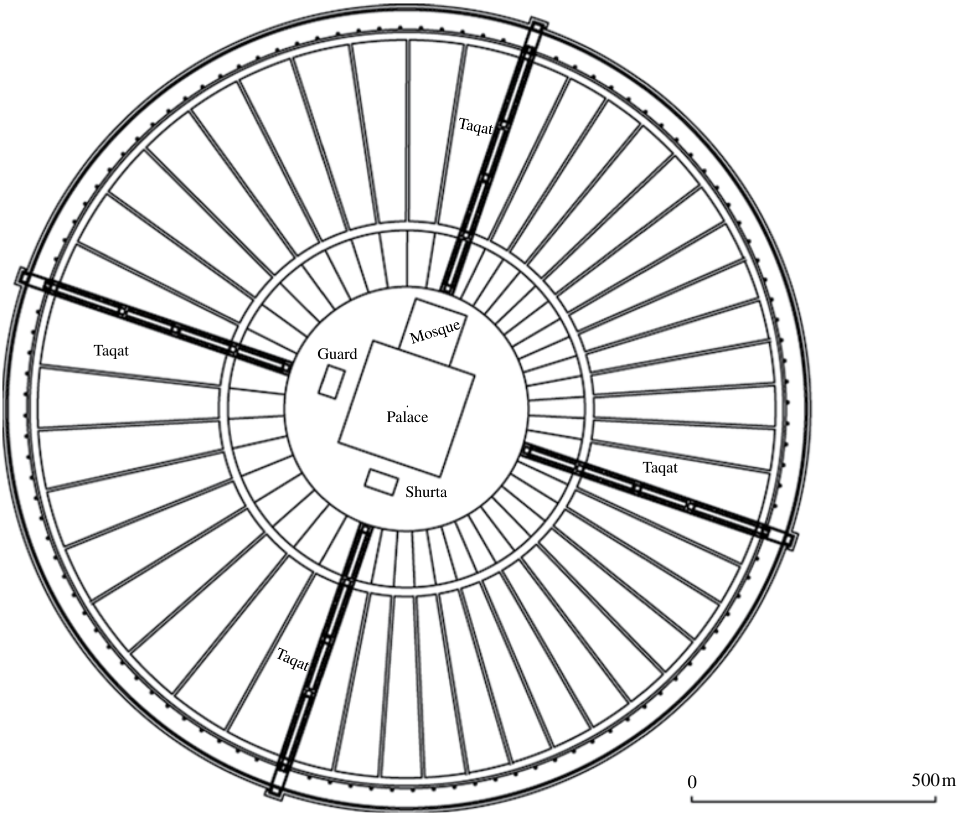

FIGURE 6.2 The Round City of Baghdad, 762–766. Source: Samarra Archaeological Survey. Reproduced with permission.

Raqqa in Syria (772), and Qadisiyya (before 796), called al-Mubarak, near Samarra, north of Baghdad, on both of which see below. Al-Rafiqa is not circular but was described as imitating Baghdad. Qadisiyya is an octagon, geometrically related to a circle. A third example, in this case a palace with a circular enclosure wall, exists at Hiraqla, outside Raqqa in Syria (Toueir 1982).

These copies are useful for confirming the details of Baghdad that has now disappeared – the type of mud-brick walls, the size of the bricks, most importantly the dimensions. Present thinking of researchers is that the Round City was about 2500–2638 m in diameter, according to the conclusions of Creswell (1940: 7–8). The most detailed single description is that of al-Yaʿqubi from the late ninth century, who states that the Round City was 5000 cubits from one gate to the other, outside the moat. This figure has been presumed by Creswell to be one quarter of the circumference, but the text could also mean half the circumference. In this latter case, the Round City would have been of similar dimensions to its imitations, for its overall diameter would have been 1655 m, and the largest overall dimension of the Octagon of Qadisiyya, between the corner towers, is 1659 m.

The concept of the Round City, if new, was based on existing ideas, including partly on the plans of the *amsar*. Al-Yaʿqubi tells us that the circular plan had never been seen before (al-Yaʿqubi 1892: 9). However, in reality, circular plans are quite frequent in Mesopotamian architecture, and concentric roughly circular city plans are already known from the Bronze Age at Mari and Tell Chuera in Syria. The closest extant example is that of the early Sasanian circular city of Ardashir-Khurreh (Firuzabad), southeast of Shiraz in Iran (third century CE), and 1950 m in diameter, with double walls and a radial plan (Huff 1969).

In the Round City of Baghdad, according to al-Yaʿqubi in the center of the *rahba* (courtyard) lay the palace of al-Mansur, whose gate was called Bab al-Dhahab (Golden Gate), 400 cubits each side, and the mosque, 200 cubits square. In a circle around the *rahba* were the following buildings:

> The residences of the younger children of al-Mansur, and his vassals (*mawali*) who are close to him in his service, the *bayt al-mal* (the treasury), the arsenal, the *diwan al-rasa'il* (bureau of correspondence), the *diwan al-kharaj* (the land tax), the *diwan al-khatam* (the seal), the *diwan al-jund* (the army), the *diwan al-ḥawa'ij* (requirements), the *diwan* of the entourages (*ahsham*), the public kitchen, and the *diwan al-nafaqat* (expenditures). (al-Yaʿqubi, 1892: 9)

Then there were four vaulted streets (*taqat*), which led to the gates of Kufa, Basra, Khurasan, and al-Sham (Damascus). These were initially occupied by merchants, providing local markets of the type provided in the cantonments at Samarra. There were also 45 radial streets (*sikka*), which were "known by [the names of] his *quwwad* and his *mawali*." The great prison, al-Matbaq, was also located in the streets. The expression *mawali* normally refers to personal vassals but may here refer to the servants of the palace, probably also including other officials. It is certain that the *quwwad* were the commanders of the army. In Samarra, these commanders were quartered with their soldiers, with one exception.

The Round City must have been an important military settlement in the time of al-Mansur. Al-Harbiyya, the northwestern suburb outside the Round City, was also an important settlement of the army: according to al-Yaʿqubi (1892: 248) it was settled by Central Asians – "the people of Balkh, Merv, al-Khuttal, Bukhara, Isbishab, Ishtakhanj, the people of the Kabulshah, the people of Khwarazm." It is not certain whether al-Yaʿqubi is speaking here of his own lifetime in the ninth century. The names appear to speak of later recruitment than the time of al-Mansur, such as al-ʿAbbasiyya of Harun al-Rashid, or the Iranian and Central Asian forces recruited by al-Maʾmun. In the case of the *quwwad* of the Round City, it is clear that he is speaking of the time of al-Mansur, for he says in two cases that he has forgotten the original name of the street.

One may conclude that the Round City was intended by al-Mansur to accommodate the palace, the mosque, the administration, the servants of the palace, and an important part of the army. Other units of the army were later settled outside the walls. Al-Mansur settled in the Round City all the elements of the state which were important to him, if we compare these details with the surviving state budget of the caliph al-Muʿtadid at the end of the ninth century. This was the new concept in Baghdad: a royal city in which the majority of the functions of the state were assembled under the eye of the caliph, and separated from the public areas of the city by a fortification. The public only entered for prayers in the congregational mosque, which according to the earlier tradition, was placed next to the palace. The problem of the security of the caliph is much mentioned in the historical sources – that of letting the general public in for prayers in the mosque – and in the end, it was al-Mansur who left the Round City and settled in a new palace, al-Khuld (Eternity), on the banks of the Tigris, in 774.

Raqqa and Qadisiyya

The Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi (r. 775–785) built al-Rusafa on the east bank of the Tigris in Baghdad during his father's lifetime, and later, Isabadh, further to the east, although the site is not known. Isabadh was later occupied by the caliph al-Hadi; if the cost of 50 million dirhams mentioned by Yaqut is correct, it was extremely large, more a city than a palace (Yaqut 1866–1874, s.v. Isabadh). Harun al-Rashid began the construction of the Octagon at Qadisiyya, just to the south of Samarra, under the name of al-Mubarak (the Blessed), to celebrate his new canal, the Qatul Abi al-Jund, but the construction was abandoned in 796, when he moved to Raqqa in Syria.

Al-Rafiqa (Raqqa)

Al-Rafiqa was built in 155 (772) by al-Mansur outside the Roman city of Nicephorium on the north bank of the Euphrates in today's Syria. Raqqa has been studied most recently in the 1980s by the German archaeological mission under the direction of the late Michael Meinecke. The plan of the city is described by Meinecke as a parallelogram *c.* 1300 m east–west surmounted by a half-circle. The original interior plan has been reconstructed by the German mission (Northedge 2005: 111). From the north gate an avenue oriented to the qibla led to a *rahba* in which were placed the mosque and probably a palace on the qibla side. There was a grid of streets oriented to the qibla. According to al-Baladhuri,

> it was built by al-Mansur, Commander of Believers, in the year 155, according to the plan of his city at Baghdad. Al-Mansur stationed in it a *jund* (army) of the people of Khurasan and entrusted it to al-Mahdi. (*Futuh al-Buldan* 1866: 179)

The city is clearly indicated as a military settlement, and there was still a garrison there in 251 (865). Al-Mahdi was occupied with the construction until the death of his father in 775, when he had to return to Baghdad. It is probable that the construction of al-Rafiqa was associated with new arrangements for governing Syria, but also possibly with a project to launch new invasions of Byzantine Anatolia by al-Mahdi. After the death of al-Mansur, al-Mahdi, as caliph, did launch a series of invasions of Anatolia, which played a significant role among Abbasid political objectives for over a century until the 860s. It may be that the construction of al-Rafiqa was a first manifestation of this policy.

In the reign of Harun al-Rashid, in 180 (796), the caliph came to settle at Raqqa. In this case, a new suburban palatial complex was added with houses for the caliph and entourage, but no new accommodation was required for the army. However, the city survived within the walls after the departure of the caliph in 808. It developed a ceramics industry, and survived until the arrival of the Mongols in 1260.

The Octagon of Qadisiyya (al-Mubarak)

The Octagon of Qadisiyya, 25 km south of Samarra, is an unfinished almost regular octagon. Three avenues lead to the central square, where the mosque is the central element, placed on the axis of the city. By contrast with the Round City and al-Rafiqa, where the palace is the central element, the site for the palace is separated from the mosque and displaced to the south, a separation that was perpetuated in Samarra and later. Nevertheless, the correspondence of the details to those of the Round City is remarkable. Although octagonal and possessing only a single fortification wall, the city was built with mud-bricks measuring 1 cubit, a canal was brought into the city for the construction, and ramps led up to the top of the walls, probably for reception halls over the gates, all as described for Baghdad.

The site appears to be identified with a palace built by Harun al-Rashid called al-Mubarak (the Blessed). Al-Tabari, however, calls it a city, and tells us that it was abandoned unfinished on Harun's departure to Raqqa in 180 (796) (al-Tabari 1879–1901, 3: 1180). Although built originally to commemorate the digging of the canal Qatul Abi al-Jund, it was too large for a simple hunting palace, and Harun must have been intending to settle there permanently, in the way he did later at Raqqa.

Samarra

Samarra (Figure 6.3) was built as a new seat of the caliphs and as a military base in 221 (836) (Northedge 2005). The foundation is to be connected with the recruitment by al-Muʿtasim of the regiment of slave Turks from 200 (816) in the reign of his brother al-Maʾmun. The rank-and-file Turks were purchased in Samarqand, but the leaders who rose high in the service of the caliph were nearly all bought in Baghdad, men such as Ashnas, Wasif, Itakh, Bugha, and others. Fortunately, at Samarra we have a more or less complete list of the army, which

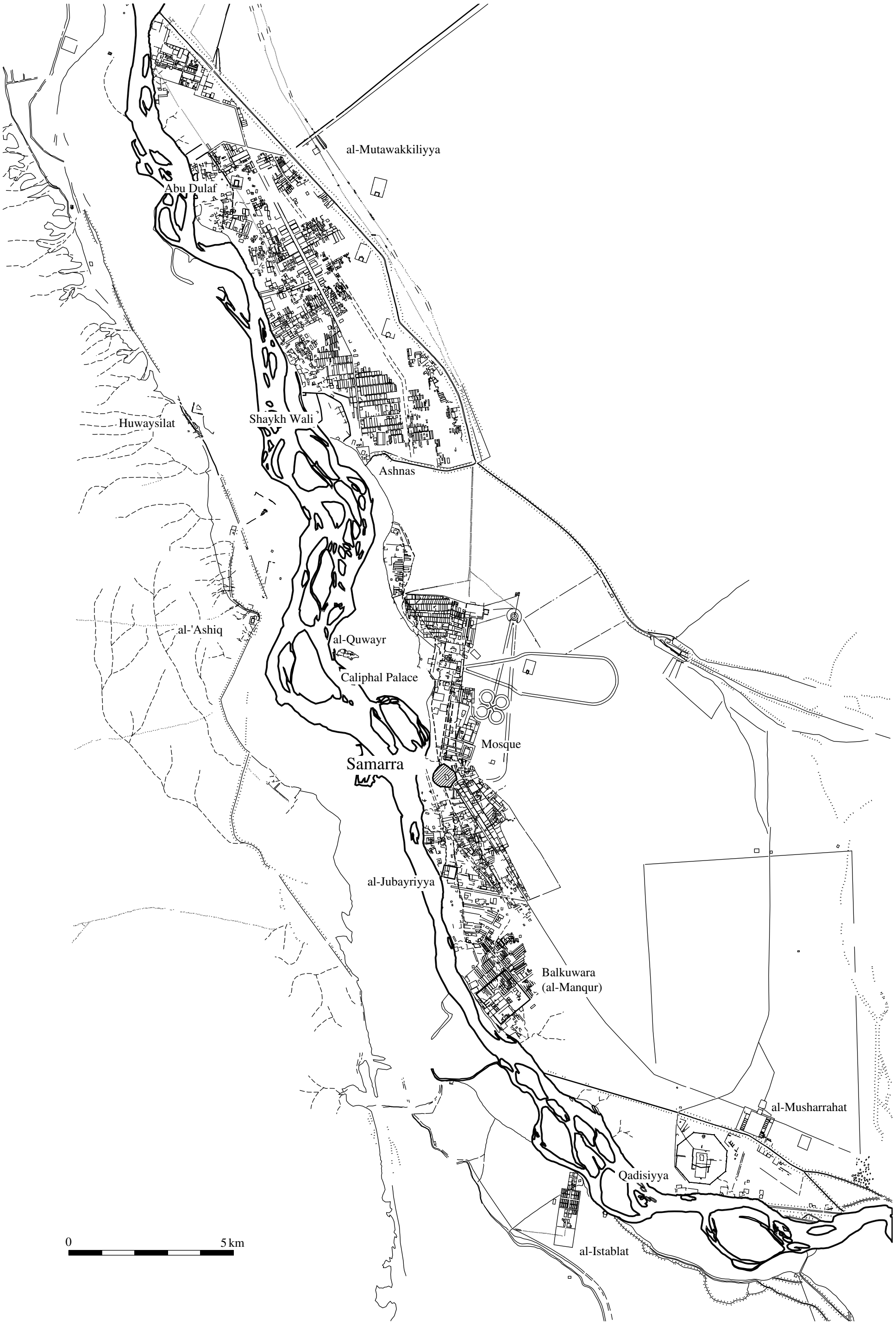
al-Mutawakkiliyya
Abu Dulaf
Huwaysilat
Shaykh Wali
Ashnas
al-'Ashiq
al-Quwayr
Caliphal Palace
Mosque
Samarra
al-Jubayriyya
Balkuwara
(al-Manqur)
al-Musharrahat
Qadisiyya
al-Istablat
0
5 km

Figure 6.3 The layout of Samarra, 836–892. Source: Samarra Archaeological Survey. Reproduced with permission.

we do not have for Baghdad. The army of Samarra was not limited to Turks, and there were many other units. Firstly, the *jund* was probably composed of *abnaʾ* (the sons of the dynasty) from Baghdad – the descendants of the Khurasani army of the early Abbasid period. Secondly, there were the slave Turks, but also princes from Central Asia taken into the service of the caliph together with their military followings. Some were Turkish, others Soghdian: al-Afshin, Khaqan ʿUrtuj and the Bukhara-khudat. There were ethnic groups of Khazar and Faraghina (men of Farghana in Uzbekistan). And lastly, there were Arabs: Maghariba, ex-prisoners from al-Muʿtasim's campaigns in Egypt, and 12 000 "Arabs, Saʿalik and others" who were settled around the Balkuwara palace. In the last case, we are probably talking about Arabs who had been on the army list, but were delisted 10 years before.

Surra Man Raʾa

The city of Samarra, laid out on the east bank of the Tigris, can be described as composed of an unwalled agglomeration of a number of units, each one with an orthogonal grid of streets. The central unit was the city of al-Muʿtasim, Surra Man Ra'a (He who sees it is delighted), founded in 221 (836). The caliph's palace was placed at the north end of the city. It was called the Dar al-Khilafa (Palace of the Caliphate) but has been generally known as al-Jawsaq al-Khaqani (Castle of the Khaqan) in modern literature. It was divided into two units: the Dar al-ʿAmma (House of the Public) and al-Jawsaq al-Khaqani. The Dar al-ʿAmma corresponds to the *Dar al-Imara* in other cities (though it is no longer adjacent to the Friday mosque), and al-Jawsaq al-Khaqani was the private residence of the caliph. From the south gate of the Dar al-Khilafa, a main avenue (later called by al-Yaʿqubi the Shariʿ Abi Ahmad) led to the mosque of al-Muʿtasim, the markets, and then further south. On both sides of the avenue, there were military cantonments. The expression used by al-Yaʿqubi for both military and civil cantonments is *qatiʿa*, in the place of *rabad* used in Baghdad. North of the mosque and markets, were the Turks of Wasif and possibly the Faraghina, to the south the *jund* of Iranian origin. The original plan was then built over by the development of the city under later caliphs.

The basic plan of palace, avenue, and grid of streets was copied for the cantonment of the Turks to the north at al-Karkh, under Ashnas (*qataʾiʿ al-Karkh)*, and to the south for the cantonment of the Central Asian Soghdians under al-Afshin at al-Matira. The establishment of these large military cantonments separated from Surra Man Raʾa was driven by the obligation of al-Muʿtasim to isolate the Turks from mixing with the native population of the city. These military cantonments were based on the model of the *rabad*s of Baghdad in two ways. Firstly, Ashnas and al-Afshin were appointed by al-Muʿtasim as governors of large quarters similar to the four divisions of Baghdad, responsible for more than their own military units. Secondly, the plan of the *qataʾiʿ*, with the palace, avenue, and grid of streets is very similar to the descriptions by al-Yaʿqubi of the principles of setting out the *rabad*s in Baghdad. That is, the basic unit plan at Samarra, used for both the military cantonments and the caliph's city was modeled on the *rabad*s of Baghdad.

The city of Samarra contained elements both of the "created" and "spontaneous" city. That is, the central city was founded in 221 (836), and then continued to develop in a spontaneous way, while new planned quarters were added around the central core. This agglomerative structure recalls the way Baghdad developed, and further back the tribal quarters of the *amsar* of Kufa and Basra. There was little difference between the military cantonments and the civilian settlement, other than the fact that the military quarters were planned with a regular orthogonal layout. In particular the same basic model was used for the city of the caliph (ex. al-Mutawakkiliyya), and the military cantonments. The major military cantonments at al-Karkh and al-Matira were land allotted by the caliph to a governor who was responsible for a group of military units of the same ethnic origin, each attached to a *qaʾid* (commander). The governor was responsible for the construction, and it is for this reason that the cantonments have a unified plan, for example, the cantonment of the Turks at al-Karkh, although the governor of al-Karkh, Ashnas, did not lead the troops in the field.

Al-Mutawakkiliyya

One of the most interesting parts of Samarra is the new royal city added to the north by al-Mutawakkil in 245 (859)–247 (861) (Figure 6.4). Founded after al-Mutawakkil's return from Damascus in 244 (858), it was abandoned upon his assassination in December 861. As a consequence the plan is almost perfectly preserved and has survived in the main until today. The plan matches that of al-Muʿtasim's Surra Man Raʾa: a main palace, al-Jaʿfari (after the personal name of the caliph al-Mutawakkil), linked to an avenue which runs straight for 7 km, past the Abu Dulaf Mosque and the houses of the elite with their followings. It is the only case where the entire plan is preserved over 1100 hectares.

The Later Royal City

What was done at Baghdad and Samarra provided the base for later palatial architecture elsewhere. One of the Samarran palaces/cantonments provided the model for later practice: Balkuwara, the only example where an enclosure wall was built (see Figure 6.3). Constructed around 239 (854) by al-Mutawakkil for his son al-Muʿtazz, Balkuwara was composed of a palace on the Tigris front, with a quasi-urban square enclosure 1171 m a side, and markets on the axial avenues. Although in this case many of the cantonment houses were built outside the enclosure, it was

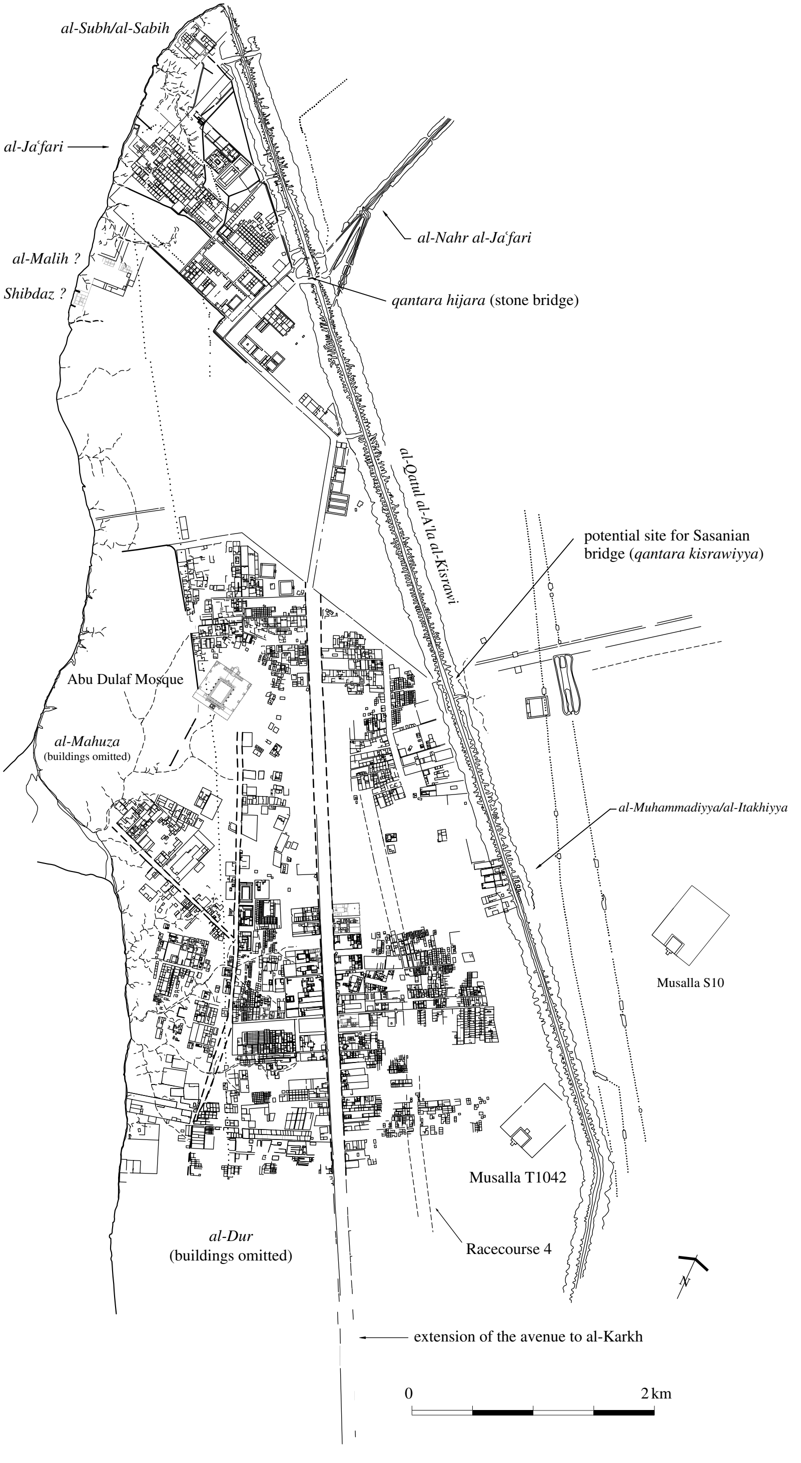
al-Subh/al-Sabih
al-Jaʿfari
al-Nahr al-Jaʿfari
al-Malih ?
Shibdaz ?
qantara hijara (stone bridge)
al-Qatul al-Aʿla al-Kisrawi
potential site for Sasanian bridge (qantara kisrawiyya)
Abu Dulaf Mosque
al-Mahuza (buildings omitted)
al-Muhammadiyya/al-Itakhiyya
Musalla S10
Musalla T1042
Racecourse 4
al-Dur (buildings omitted)
N
extension of the avenue to al-Karkh
0
2 km

Figure 6.4 Plan of al-Mutawakkiliyya, 859–861. Source: Samarra Archaeological Survey. Reproduced with permission.

indicative for the future. The model of the royal city continued in the Mediterranean area, but the unfortified suburb was abandoned, for reasons of security.

In the case of Cairo (Figure 6.5), outside the walls of Fustat, a governor's settlement called al-ʿAskar was built in 133 (751). Then the rebel Abbasid governor, Ahmad ibn Tulun (a Turkic slave-soldier raised in Samarra, known as Ibn Tulun), built al-Qataʾiʿ, where the mosque was completed in 265 (879). Both of these were unwalled, and may have been palace complexes – only the Mosque of Ibn Tulun is preserved, and both its form and decoration show clear affinities with the mosques of Samarra.

At the time of the Fatimid conquest of Egypt in 358 (969) a new caliphal city was built, al-Qahira (the Victorious, from whence Cairo), where, within its rectangle of mud-brick walls 1 km a side, the court, the al-Azhar Mosque, and the Fatimid army were accommodated (see Anderson and Pruitt, CHAPTER 9). In effect the purpose was similar to that of Baghdad. Though much is now buried, the plan of the original al-Qahira can be said to be developed from the square plan of the Balkuwara palace at Samarra – with the palace opening onto the river. An important addition was that of a garden in front of the palace. The garden on the Nile was called Bustan Kafur (Garden of Kafur). Earlier fortified royal cities such as the Round City of Baghdad are not known to have had gardens, which may have been a factor in convincing al-Mansur to leave it and settle in a palace on the Tigris.

The practice was repeated further west. The best-preserved and most intensively studied site of a caliphal city is Madinat al-Zahraʾ, 6 km from Cordoba in Spain, and founded in 325 (936). Here, within a double stone fortification, a rectangle of 750 × 1500 m, the Umayyad ruler ʿAbd al-Rahman III built his administrative city, shortly after declaring himself caliph (*Amir al-Muʾminin*) in 316 (929). The declaration of the caliphate and the foundation of the royal city were certainly linked (see Anderson and Pruitt, CHAPTER 9). The texts speak of the settling of the caliph and his court in the city, along with the administration and at least part of the army: in this Madinat al-Zahraʾ followed the model of Baghdad. As in al-Qahira and Balkuwara, the palace was fronted by a large garden, forming a central element of the plan.

Less is known about the plans of other royal cities around the Mediterranean. Among the vassals of the Abbasids, the Aghlabids in Tunisia built Raqqada outside Qayrawan in 273 (876). Raqqada has been partly excavated, but the publications are few. The first site to be built by the Fatimids after their takeover of Ifriqiyya in 296 (909) was al-Mahdiyya, the only case where a coastal peninsular site was chosen for a caliphal city. In 334–336 (945–948), Mahdiyya was replaced by Sabra (al-Mansuriyya), again a fortified settlement outside the walls of Qayrawan. Here one palace has been excavated inside an approximately circular fortification wall, but the excavations have yet to be published. Lesser dynasts also built their royal cities on this model: the best-preserved example is Qalʿat Bani Hammad in Algeria, built by the Bani Hammad at the beginning of the eleventh century. There was also a walled governmental quarter at Palermo in Sicily called al-Khalis, founded by the Fatimids.

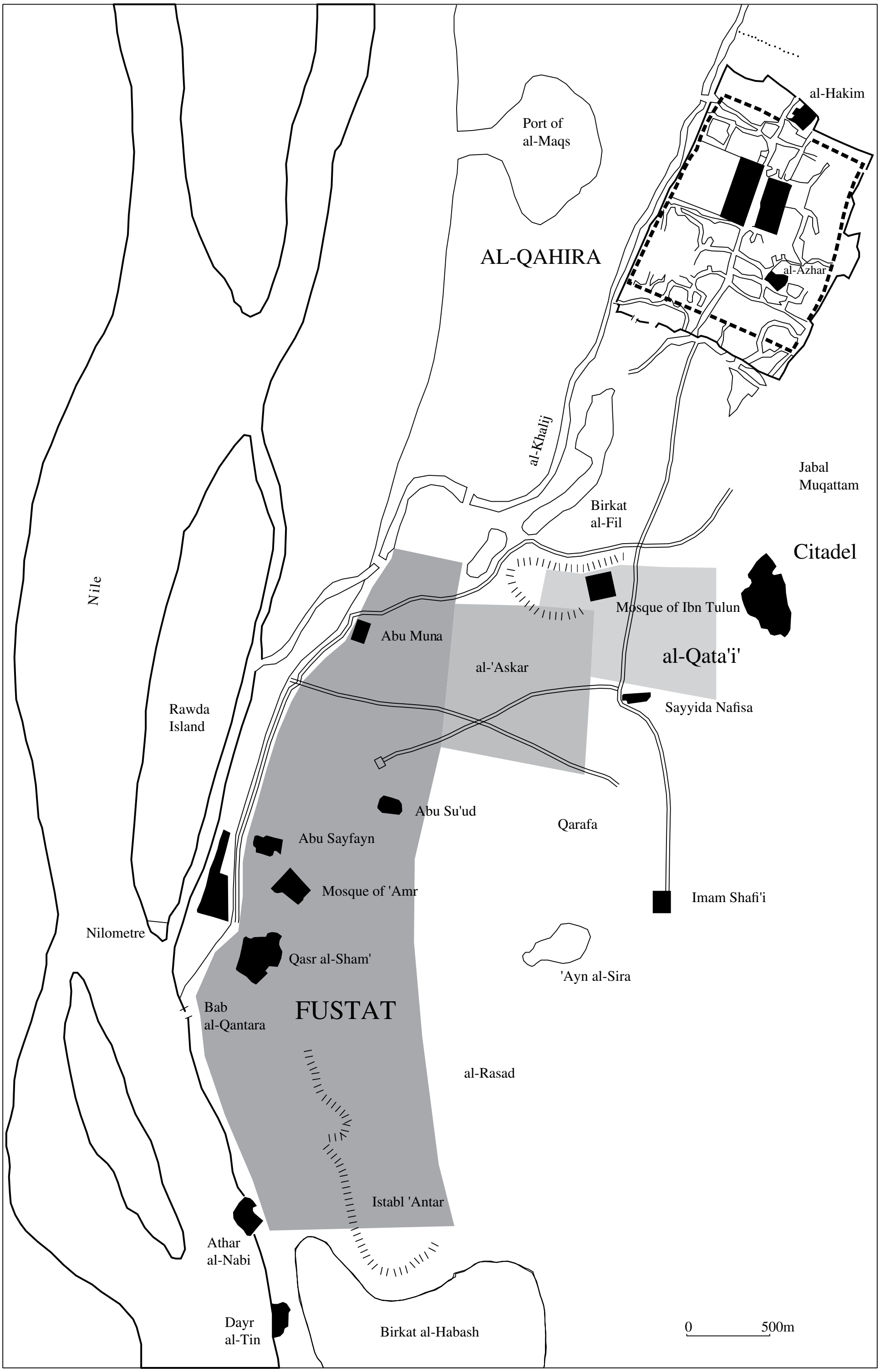
al-Hakim
Port of
al-Maqs
AL-QAHIRA
al-Azhar
al-Khalij
Jabal
Muqattam
Birkat
al-Fil
Citadel
Nile
Mosque of Ibn Tulun
Abu Muna
al-Qata'i'
al-'Askar
Sayyida Nafisa
Rawda
Island
Abu Su'ud
Qarafa
Abu Sayfayn
Mosque of 'Amr
Imam Shafi'i
Nilometre
Qasr al-Sham'
'Ayn al-Sira
Bab
al-Qantara
FUSTAT
al-Rasad
Istabl 'Antar
Athar
al-Nabi
Dayr
al-Tin
Birkat al-Habash
0
500m

Figure 6.5 Schema of the development of Fustat and al-Qahira. Source: Samarra Archaeological Survey. Reproduced with permission.

In the east, the construction of governmental complexes in the post-caliphal period was not so common. Lashkari Bazar in Afghanistan is the best-known example. As it has survived, the site is composed of a number of mud-brick palaces, mansions, and compounds to the north of the city of Bust on the Helmand river. The site was certainly in existence by 985, in the early days of the Ghaznavid dynasty (Turkish military slaves independent in eastern Afghanistan and India). But Allen suggests that the first constructions were made up to 50 years earlier (Allen 1988). At any rate, the major expansion of the site took place under Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 998–1030) and his son Masʿud (r. 1031–1041). Occupation continued into at least the second half of the twelfth century according to the pottery recovered. The excavator compares the site to Samarra (Schlumberger 1978), but, as Allen notes, there is no mention of a built settlement there for the army. At the time, the site was called al-ʿAskar (the "camp") or Lashgar-gah (the "army place"). The army must have been settled in tents on a seasonal basis. The absence of similar sites elsewhere may be attributed to the disappearance of mud-brick remains in cultivated areas, but it may be that the successor dynasties of the "Iranian intermezzo," as Minorsky called it, before the arrival of the Seljuq Turkish dynasty in the middle of the eleventh century, were not interested in the Iraqi model.

Nevertheless, it must be underlined that there were new cities founded outside the purview of the central government in this very period but whose plan had nothing in common with the monumental plans described. This was particularly true of the ports of the Gulf, where the Abbasid state had little role and did not invest. The best example is the port of Siraf on the Iranian coast of the Gulf, which came to importance in the China trade in the eighth and ninth centuries, and which declined in the eleventh century (Whitehouse 2009). The excavations revealed a port with markets surrounding the mosque, bourgeois houses of the merchants, even a possible governor's house, but no monumental plan.

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7

Samarra and Abbasid Ornament

Marcus Milwright

Samarra is located on the Tigris River in Iraq. Founded by the Abbasid caliph al-Muʿtasim (r. 833–842) in 836, the city remained the seat of the dynasty until 892. While Samarra continued to function, and there is still an occupied town carrying that name, the removal of caliphal patronage after 892 led to abandonment of the palaces and the majority of the other structures. Subject to widespread looting throughout the Islamic period (this practice occurred even during the ninth century), Samarra is now an enormous ruin field measuring some 35 km in length. Most of the site is on the eastern bank of the river. Few buildings remain standing even in a partial state, and most of Abbasid Samarra comprises the lower parts of walls constructed of baked brick, mud brick, or *pisé* (rammed earth) with occasional traces of stucco facing (for a detailed survey of the architecture, see Northedge 2005a and his CHAPTER 6).

What lends Samarra considerable importance for the study of Islamic art and archaeology is the fact that, unlike the earlier Abbasid foundation of Baghdad (Madinat al-Salam, or City of Peace, founded 762–766), the vast majority of this city was abandoned and not subsequently redeveloped. As a result it is possible to investigate aspects of early Islamic city life ranging from urban planning and monumental architecture to the manufacture and use of portable artifacts. Excavations and surveys in Samarra have also revealed a diverse range of architectural decoration. Abbasid Samarra has often been presented in scholarship as a watershed in the evolution of Islamic art and architecture (the so-called Samarra horizon), with the characteristics of late antiquity (here defined as third to eighth centuries CE) giving way to a more identifiably "Islamic" set of aesthetic values during and after the ninth century. These interpretations of the physical evidence from Samarra and of other sites of the late eighth and ninth centuries should not be accepted

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uncritically, however, as we remain poorly informed about the factors – political, doctrinal, social, economic – that stimulated changes in artistic and technical innovations at this time. Furthermore, we need to consider carefully the extent to which the apparently novel developments in early Abbasid ornament have their origins in the visual traditions and craft practices of earlier centuries.

This chapter starts with a review of the evidence, archaeological and literary, for the presence of architectural ornament in Samarra between 836 and 892. The second section provides a context for the Samarran material in the buildings of the sixth to the ninth centuries in the Middle East, with a particular emphasis upon the employment of carved and molded stucco. The third section assesses the significance of Samarra for the understanding of the evolution of Islamic ornamental traditions from its earliest manifestations until the eleventh century (for photographs of many of the sites mentioned in this chapter, see Archnet n.d.).

Architectural Ornament in Samarra

There can be little doubt that the palaces, elite houses, bathhouses, mosques, and other civic buildings in Samarra were originally richly decorated. The fragmentary nature of the surviving remains makes it challenging to picture the city between 836 and 892, but we can gain some glimpses into its past splendors through study of the archaeological evidence and the written record. Important among the textual sources are poems (*qasida*s) composed about specific palaces and references to the city in chronicles and geographical encyclopedias (the sources are collected and analyzed in Northedge 2005a: 29–32, 267–358). Sources such as al-Masʿudi's (d. *c.* 956) *Muruj al-dhahab* (Fields of Gold) and the anonymous eleventh-century work entitled *Kitab al-hadaya wa'l-tuhaf* (*Book of Gifts and Rarities*, trans. Qaddumi 1996) furnish us with further details about the lavish material culture of the Abbasid royal court, both in Baghdad and in Samarra.

Most of the written sources concern themselves with the physical architecture, the names of buildings and patrons, and the topography of the city, and much less attention is given to the actual decoration. There are several *qasida*s that describe specific palaces, and while these tend to employ familiar *topoi* such as comparisons to the architectural achievements of Solomon, they also contain some references to building materials and their visual impact. Most relevant in the present context are the references to marble, which are usually accompanied by descriptions of waves, clouds, or flowing water. Metaphors relating to water are common in Greek descriptions of veined marble, especially marble veneer, from the fourth century onward and these ekphrastic themes are subsequently picked up in Arabic literature. The *qasida*s also allude to the presence of gold (for example, Ibn al-Muʿtazz's description of the palace of al-Kamil as having "a ceiling ablaze with the fire of pure gold") and pearls in the architectural decoration of Samarra (trans. in Meisami 2001a). This contrasts with the impression that might be drawn from the remains of early Islamic palaces in which the norm was to employ relatively cheap materials. This widespread view may be misleading given that, unlike "country palaces," those in major urban centers such as the Umayyad capital Damascus have disappeared with no trace. We should not take the references in poetry entirely literally, but it is clear that gold leaf and mother-of-pearl, at least, were part of the lavish ornamental programs of buildings. Precious metals also appear in narrative accounts of palaces; for example, the palace of al-Burj is claimed by al-Shabushti (d. *c.*1000) to have contained a pool (*birka*) whose sides were lined with plates of silver, a golden tree with singing birds, and a throne of gold evoking Solomonic themes (trans. in Northedge 2005a: 284). The overwhelming magnificence of the Abbasid palaces is represented well in the account of the Byzantine embassy to al-Muqtadir Billah (r. 908–932) in late Abbasid Baghdad in 917 (one version of this account is translated in Qaddumi 1996: 148–155, nos. 161–164, see Anderson and Pruitt, CHAPTER 9). On the day of their audience, the ambassadors were led, over the course of many hours, through lavishly appointed courtyards before finally meeting the caliph himself. To give just one example of the ornamentation of a Baghdadi palace:

> Then the envoys were ushered into the palace known as "al-Firdaws" (Paradise), which contained innumerable and priceless quantities of equipment and richly-colored fabrics (*washy*). Five thousand gilded coats of mail (*jawshan*) were hung in the vestibules of al-Firdaws.
>
> Then they were led out into a long passageway, three hundred cubits long. On its two sides were hanging about ten thousand leather shields, helmets, [egg-shaped] helmets, plate armour, mail armour, ornate quivers, and bows. Two thousand black servants were placed on the right and left. (Qaddumi 1996: 152, no. 162)

The account of the visit of the Byzantine ambassadors gives a vivid insight into the diverse material culture of the Abbasid court in the early tenth century. What becomes apparent is that thousands of textiles, weapons, and other portable artifacts were brought out from the caliphal treasury and from other palaces in order to transform the walls and vaults of the interior spaces. One might even claim that the richly clad functionaries and exotic animals performed similar roles as "ornaments" to the buildings within which they were arranged. In these respects the Abbasid caliphs were following the lead offered by the emperors of Constantinople and the Sasanian shahs (r. 224–651). Such written accounts are pertinent in the present context because they illustrate the profoundly adaptable quality of the architectural spaces in early Islamic palaces; where the permanent decoration in palaces – wood or marble paneling, carved or molded stucco, painting, mosaic, tiles, and so on – probably remained visible for much of the time, they could have been largely obscured by multicolored fabrics, metalwork, or even ranks of soldiers and courtiers when the situation demanded it. Therefore, caution is warranted in our interpretations of relatively cheap decorative media; for all of their importance in the scholarly reconstruction of the evolution of Islamic art, it should be conceded that carved or molded stucco panels were unlikely to have excited much attention among the members of the Abbasid elite.

To what extent does the archaeological evidence support the claims made in Arabic written sources? Could it be that these are mere hyperbole? Few of the textiles of this period have survived, and it is not possible to assess meaningfully how carpets, cushions, curtains, and wall hangings might have transformed the architectural spaces of Samarra. The same can be said about the other types of movable object mentioned, for example, in the reception of the Byzantine ambassadors in tenth-century Baghdad. Nothing remains of other extraordinary features like the precious metal automata. More can be said about the decorative media employed as permanent coverings for the floors, walls, vaults, and windows because many of these have been recovered during archaeological research in Samarra.

What can be reconstructed from the archaeological evidence is constrained by two factors, however. First is the patchy nature of the surviving material: the more expensive decorative materials, such as mosaic, glazed tiles, glass, imported hardwoods, and fine stone are rarely encountered. Always employed rather sparingly, these materials were usually looted from abandoned structures; it was standard practice in royal courts to remove marble veneer and other valuable architectural fittings along with all the furnishings. As a result the most extensive survivals are in the cheaper ornamental media, particularly the painted, carved, or molded stucco. The second issue relates to the history of research at the site itself. Most important in this respect are the methodological problems associated with the ground-breaking publications of the site led by the German team of Ernst Herzfeld during the last years of Ottoman rule (Northedge 2005b). While his own *Der Wandschmuck der Bauten von Samarra und seine Ornamentik* (1923) and *Die Malereien von Samarra* (1927) and the discussions of glazed tiles in Friedrich Sarre's publication on ceramics (1925) and of architectural glass in the work by Carl Lamm (1928) remain key sources, these studies are compromised by the failure to publish the stratigraphic information associated with the excavation of specific buildings. This omission has most serious implications for structures such as the Dar al-Khilafa (Palace of the Caliphate, sometimes known as the al-Jawsaq al-Khaqani) that remained in use throughout the Samarran period and which exhibits evidence for several phases of construction and renovation. The evidence published by Herzfeld and his colleagues can be supplemented by the results of excavations conducted by the Iraq Directorate-General of Antiquities (from 1936), the more recent work led by Alastair Northedge (for references, see Northedge 2005a), and the final publication of Herzfeld's 1910–1912 campaign by Thomas Leisten (2003). Many samples from Herzfeld's excavations were exported and are now located in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin and other international collections, where most of them are in storage with no attempt yet at systematic analysis.

The finds of luxury materials can be briefly summarized. Glass mosaic cubes have been recovered from locations including the congregational mosque, the Dar al-Khilafa, and other palaces such as al-Haruni (constructed by al-Wathiq, r. 842–847) and Balkuwara (constructed by al-Mutawakkil, r. 847–861). The irregular cubes are primarily of colored glass, with others formed from marble, pebbles, and mother-of-pearl. The golden cubes were made by laying gold leaf onto cast panes of glass, which in the case of those recovered from Balkuwara, are greenish in color. The color scheme of the designs was dominated by black, green and gold, with hints of white and very limited use of red mosaic cubes. The setting of the cubes often allowed for space between them, with the sections of exposed plaster colored with paint (Leisten 2003: 54, 97–98. Also Creswell 1932–1940, II: 258, 268). This technique compares unfavorably with the more sophisticated workmanship of Umayyad Syria where the cubes are closely set in the manner of contemporary Byzantine mosaics. In Samarra larger sections of glass and mother-of-pearl were made into a variety of shapes that were arranged into decorative panels and there were also millefiore tiles (Carboni and Whitehouse 2001: 18–19, fig. 4, 148, no. 61; Lamm 1928: 109–110, nos. 304–312). Window glass could take the form of round panes with a raised central section (i.e., a bull's eye design), as is recorded in Balkuwara and Herzfeld's "House XI" (Leisten 2003: 98, 133, fig. 84). Glass floor tiles were recovered from Abbasid period palaces at Raqqa, Syria, but there is no evidence for this unusual practice at Samarra (Daiber and Becker 2004: pl. 26.c, d).

Marble (here meaning all types of hard, crystalline stone that can be polished to a shine) would have been an expensive, imported material in ninth-century Samarra; southern Iraq does not possess significant resources of decorative stone, and such heavy materials were difficult and costly to transport (Milwright 2001: 98–99, 103–104). Al-Muʿtasim evidently established a marble workshop in the Syrian port of Latakia to supply material for his new city, and other centers for quarrying, shaping, and carving stone were probably operational at this time (Yaʿqubi, trans. in Northedge 2005a: 268). Worked stone might also be gathered from other sources; for example, Severus ibn Muqaffaʿ (d. 987) describes the forcible removal of columns and paving from the churches of Egypt (Milwright 2001: 104). Marble was utilized at Samarra in ways that would have been largely familiar in the architecture of late antiquity. Extant examples include veneer facing for walls and opus sectile pavements. More interesting are the fragments from carved marble friezes (illustrated in Creswell 1932–1940, II: pls. 53.f, 54.a–d, 58.b, c), as they share formal characteristics with the more common sculpted stucco from the site.

Wood was utilized both for structural and decorative purposes in the architecture of Samarra. Timber would mostly have been imported. Logs were floated on rafts (*kallak*s) down the Tigris River from the forested areas of eastern Anatolia, while exotic hardwoods arrived by sea to Basra or the other ports on the northern side of the Gulf (Milwright 2001: 86–87). Written sources of the Abbasid period mention the extensive use of imported wood in domestic architecture and furniture (see examples in Ahsan 1979: 176–180; Qaddumi 1996: 150–154, 198–199). The archaeological evidence is more sparse, however, and the main decorative use of wood was for wall paneling and ceilings. In the case of the mihrab of the congregational mosque this was placed below sections sheathed in mosaic (Leisten 2003: 46). Some carved wooden panels exhibit affinities with the so-called beveled style (e.g., from the Dar al-Khilafa, illustrated in Creswell 1932–1940, I: pls. 53.e, 54.c, d, 56.c, 57.f, g, 58.a. Also a door leaf from an unidentified building, pl. 56.d).

Decorative ceramic tiles are rare at Samarra, with the most significant assemblage coming from the Dar al-Khilafa (Figure 7.1). Commonly the tiles comprised tricolored abstract patterns employing luster pigments – perhaps applied with a sponge – painted on an opaque white (tin-opacified) glaze (Sarre 1925: 50–52, figs. 121–126). It has been suggested that this is an imitation of polished breccia or granitic veneer panels. There were also more elaborate tiles with wreaths and cockerels painted onto the same crimson, black, and golden luster background. Potters in Abbasid Iraq were evidently producing a more varied range of designs, and another group of luster-painted ninth-century tiles appears around the arch of the mihrab in the congregational mosque of Qayrawan (Kairouan) in Tunisia. These tiles were originally part of a consignment sent from Iraq to adorn the palace of the vassal Aghlabid prince, Abu Ibrahim Ahmad (r. 856–863) (Allan 2001: 111). Some of the tiles may have been made in Qayrawan itself by an Iraqi potter. James Allan (2001) has suggested ways in which these tiles might once have been laid, singly or in combinations of two or more designs, to create decorative friezes within the palaces and large houses of Samarra and Baghdad (Figure 7.2). If his reconstructions are correct, we can regard the tile decoration of ninth-century Iraq as a formative stage in the evolution of one of the most significant forms of Islamic architectural ornament. Some of the motifs draw upon repeated designs encountered in the stucco revetments of Persian palaces of the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods (e.g. Allan 2001: fig. 3; Thompson 1976: pls. XX.1, XXII.1, XXIII.1, XXIV.1).

It should be emphasized that the bulk of our evidence for architectural decoration at Samarra comes from two of the cheaper media: bricks and stucco. The laying of baked bricks in different orientations in order to create decorative patterns is a characteristic feature of eastern Islamic architecture from the tenth century onward, but this mode of decoration is not well developed in Samarra (see, e.g., the cusped arches of the blind niches on the façade of Qasr al-ʿAshiq and on the socle of the minaret of the congregational mosque or in earlier Abbasid structures such as the palace of Ukhaydir in southwestern Iraq). Instead, patrons generally preferred to have the walls faced with layers of stucco (i.e., gypsum plaster), a common Sasanian practice in that region. This relatively cheap material allowed for a range of decorative techniques.

Flat or curved surfaces could be prepared for painting, and fragments of dry fresco have been recovered from mosques, palaces, houses, and bathhouses (Herzfeld 1927; Hoffman 2008; Leisten 2003: pls. 50, 51). Some abstract designs are encountered, and others are imitative of veined marble. Painted representations of veined marble can be found in Roman period fresco painting as well, and examples are attested in Umayyad and early Abbasid palatial buildings in Syria. The most impressive Samarran painted panels, such as those located in the private "Harim" area of the Dar al-Khilafa, combine representations of humans and animals with stylized vegetal forms, including acanthus scrolls that echo the mosaics

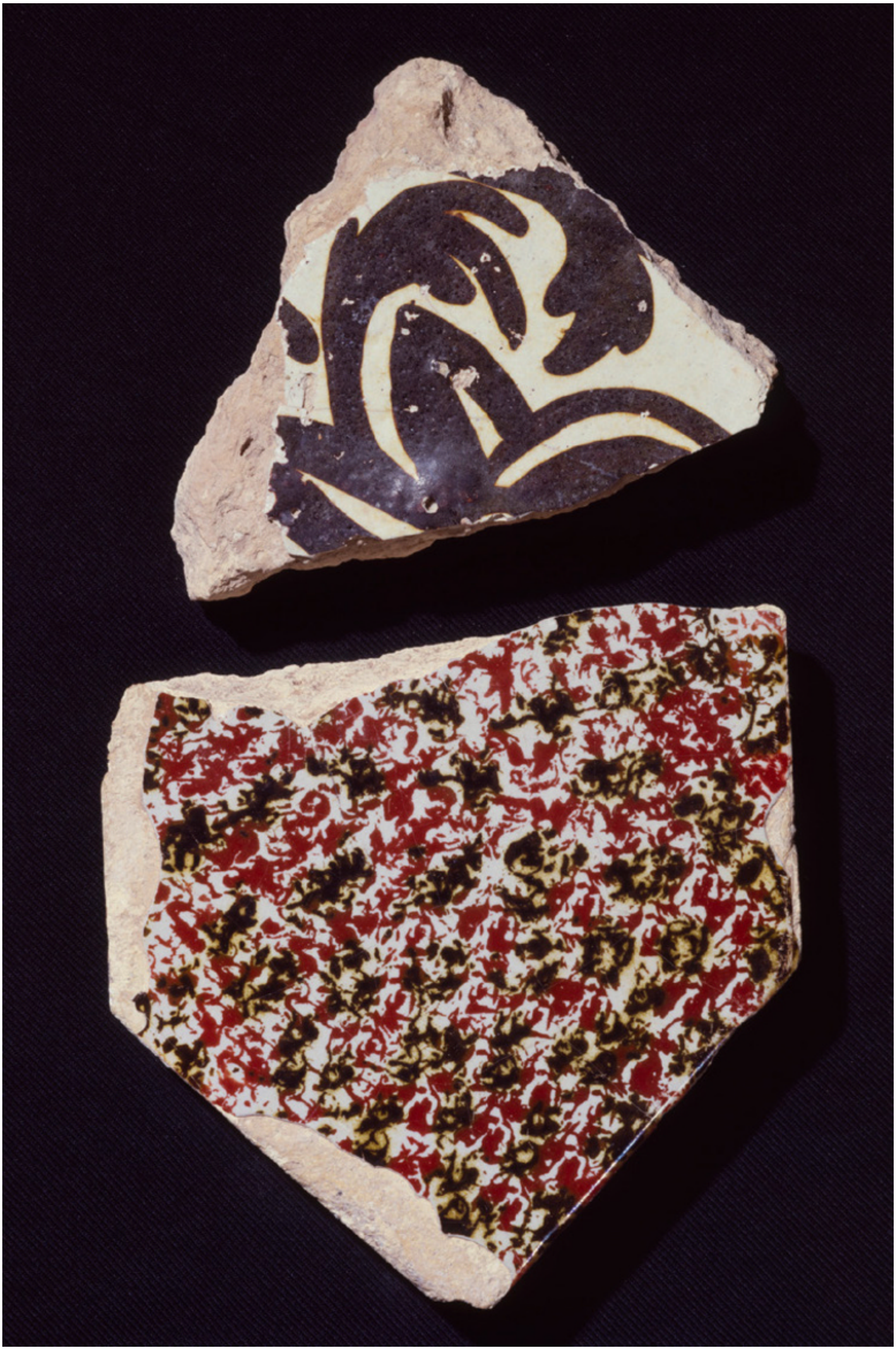

FIGURE 7.1 Luster-painted earthenware tiles from Samarra, Iraq, ninth century. Source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Reproduced with permission.

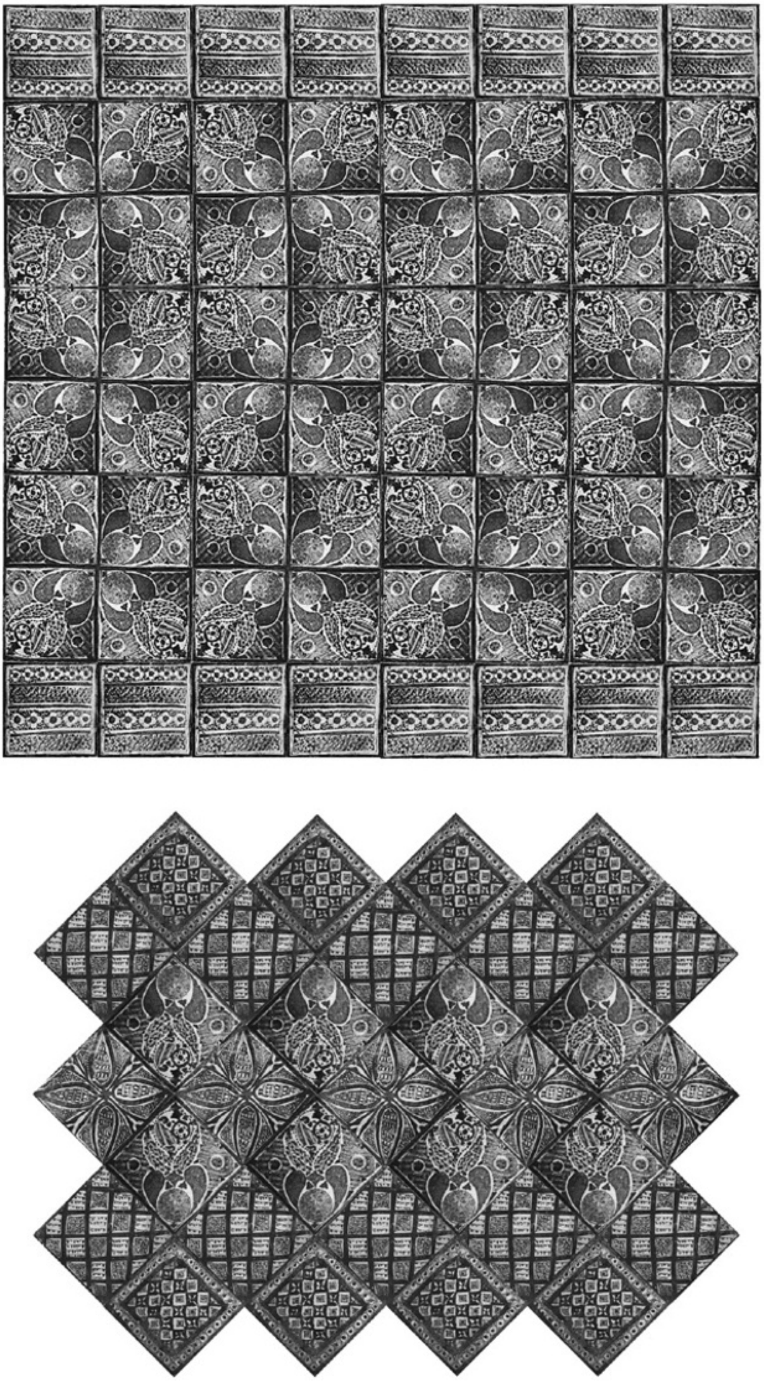

Figure 7.2 Hypothetical tile friezes based on examples from Qayrawan, Tunisia. After Allan 2001. Source: Created by Naomi Shields. Reproduced with permission.

of the drum of the Dome of the Rock. Commonly, each section is enclosed within a rectangular frame bordered on its inner and outer face by lines of white dots on a black ground. These dots derive from the traditional framing device found on Persian silks. The central part of the frame might contain a frieze of birds or hunting dogs, a schematic vinescroll, or repeated rosettes. While much of this has a rather generic character, fusing aspects of the visual vocabularies of the late antique Mediterranean and Sasanian Iran, there are elements that suggest a degree of first-hand observation. For example, the famous "two dancers" panel from the Dar al-Khilafa is notable for the distinctive hairstyles of the Turkic courtesans. The paintings are characterized by a linear style with little attention to the modeling of sculptural form seen in Umayyad wall paintings (as in the late eighth-century Qusayr ʿAmra, Jordan). Figures are painted directly on a white ground with no attempt to locate them within an illusionistic picture space. This flatness is somewhat offset by the use of a vivid, polychromatic palette. A similar style appears on the painted wine jars excavated in the Dar al-Khilafa (Rice 1958).

Carved and molded stucco comprises the most common form of surviving architectural decoration. Sculpted stucco is found on vaults and frames around windows and doors, but it was employed most extensively to create the dados around the large interior spaces of Samarran palaces and houses (Figure 7.3). The designs tend to be relatively simple, drawing upon a limited vocabulary of geometric forms, rosettes, and vinescrolls incorporating highly schematic leaves and bunches of grapes. Herzfeld identified three fairly distinct modes in the stucco work of Samarra, and this basic categorization has formed the basis of subsequent scholarship (Herzfeld 1923. The chronology of these styles was revised by Creswell 1932–1940, II: 286–288). While a brief review of these three styles suggests an evolutionary path leading from a notional degree of classical naturalism ("style A") toward a largely abstracted mode ("style C"), it is difficult to determine from the archaeological evidence whether there is any temporal distinction

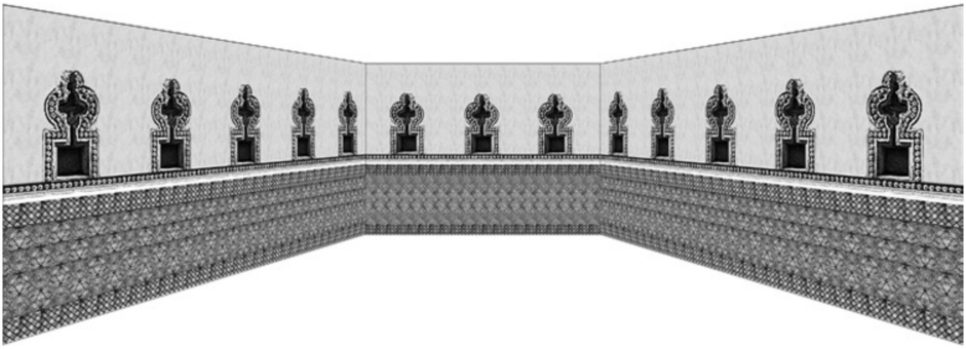

FIGURE 7.3 Speculative reconstruction of a Samarran interior using luster tiles from Qayrawan, Tunisia, and stucco elements from the palaces of Balkuwara, Iraq. Source: Created by Naomi Shields. Reproduced with permission.

in Samarran architecture between the three styles (Figure 7.4a–c). This chronological uncertainty leaves open three important questions: were all three styles employed simultaneously in the architecture of Samarra; did any of these styles originate in the city itself; and were any of these styles, particularly style C (the so-called beveled style), reliant upon developments in other media?

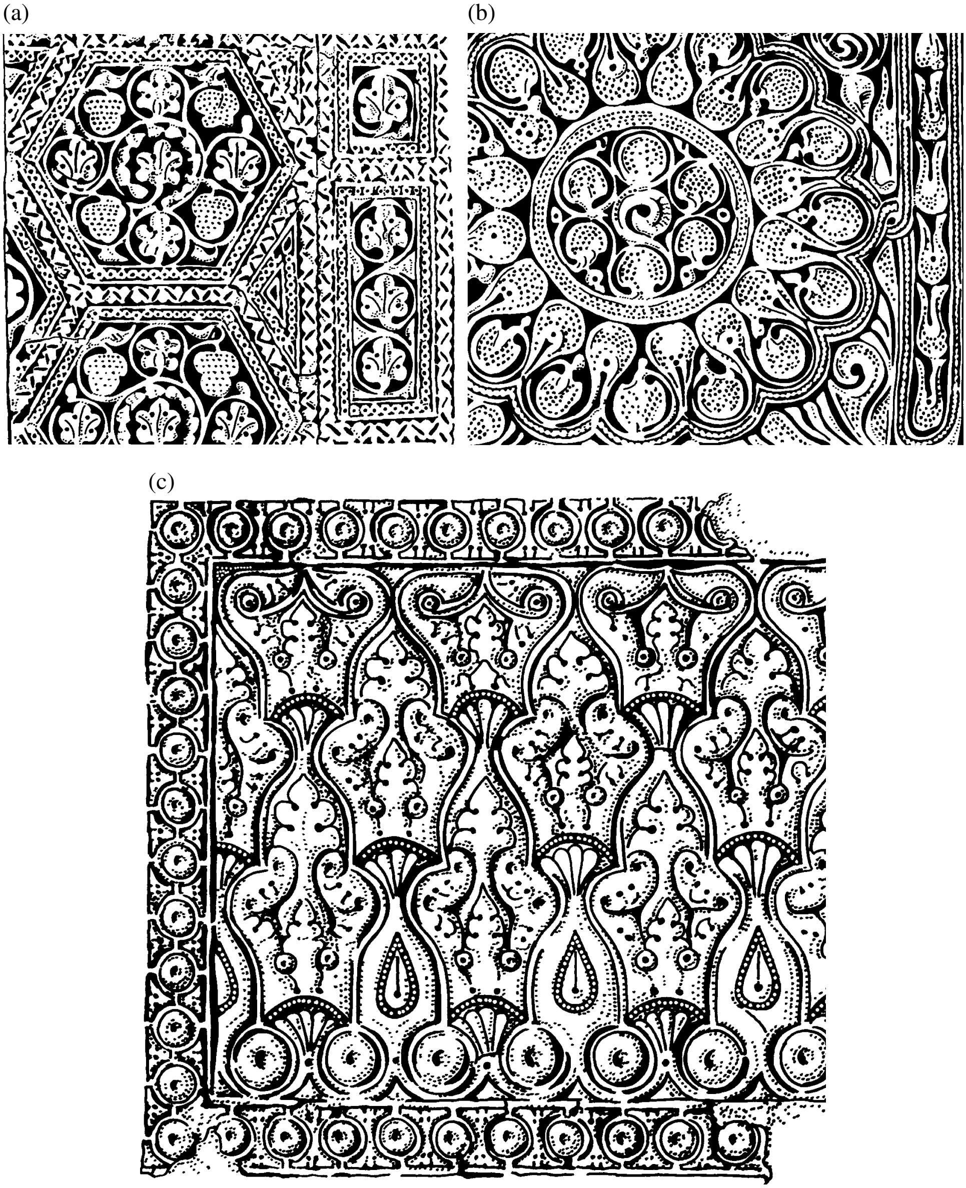

Figure 7.4 Examples of ornamental stucco friezes from Samarra (not to scale). (a) Style A; (b) Style B; (c) Style C. Source: Marcus Milwright. Reproduced with permission.

The first two styles are unified in terms of technique: both are carved directly into a freshly laid stucco panel with a deeply excavated background and additional detail created by drilling or incising. The practice of cutting at a perpendicular angle into the surface creates a sharp distinction between foreground and background. All of the foreground features are presented flat to the surface, without any attempt to model them in space. Style A panels make extensive use of the vine leaf and scrolling stem, but any vestigial sense of naturalism is immediately denied by the constant placement of the leaves in the same orientation and the almost perfectly circular shape of the surrounding stem. This creates a basic, broadly circular unit which can be repeated along a border clustered together to form geometric shapes. Style B also subdivides the rectangular panel into a series of smaller frames: circular, square, rectangular, triangular, or in the form of an elongated hexagon. Within these spaces the viewer is confronted with interlocking curved shapes that maintain a loose affiliation with actual plant forms. While the same clear relationship between foreground and background of style A is maintained in style B, the latter allows for much greater ambiguity in representational terms. Incisions and drilling are the principal ways in which the stucco surface is animated, but these marks no longer differentiate clearly the individual components of leaf, fruit cluster, or stem. Furthermore, the curving, broadly vegetal designs are now entirely subordinated to the frames that contain them.

The final mode ("style C") may be seen as a continuation of the trends manifested in style B but with a radical technological innovation. Where styles A and B are carved into the partially dried stucco, style C is achieved largely through pressing a mold, probably wooden, into wet stucco. The pattern created through this process could then be enhanced through polishing and the limited addition of pigment (for technical analysis of Samarran stucco, see Burgio, Clark, and Rosser-Owen 2007). Style C adopts the flowing, formally ambiguous features of style B but seeks also to break down the rigid division of foreground and background space. This is achieved by making the deeper impressions descend from the surface at an angle (approximately 45° to the horizontal). Sharp carinations are avoided, and all the cuts into the surface tend to be slightly curved rather than straight. These defining qualities have led to style C decoration being labeled as the "beveled style." The interlocking shapes are always formed of curved lines and are usually symmetrical through the vertical axis. In addition to forms inspired by plants, one also encounters motifs that look like Sasanian-inspired wings (cf. Thompson 1976: pls. XXIII.1, XXIV.1). Although revetments in the beveled style are usually made up of an uninterrupted repetition of a given design, the rectangular space was sometimes broken up by internal frames. For example, in the rooms of Balkuwara and "House XIII" there are dados where beveled designs are enclosed within repeated lozenges, creating a visual impression akin to quarter-sawn marble veneer (Allen 1988: 13, fig. 31; Leisten 2003: pl. 49.b).

The utilization of carved molds must have represented an economic benefit to artisans and their patrons; the principal investment of labor was in the design and carving of the mold and, once made, it could be put to use repeatedly so as to create the dados running around the large rooms of Samarran dwellings. In order to avoid pulling sections of wet stucco from the walls when the mold was removed, the raised detail of the mold was kept relatively shallow and carved at an oblique angle. The importance of these practical considerations should not be minimized, but they do not serve as an explanation for the crucial step of dissolving the spatial differentiation between the frontal plane and the background (Allen 1988: 11). Most significant in this context is the occurrence of the beveled style on marble and wooden panels from Samarra: both media would have to be carved, meaning that the adoption of this style resulted in no saving of time and effort for the artisans working in these media. This new style became a vogue in the ninth century; broadly contemporary wooden panels with beveled ornament are also known from Egypt and Syria, while designs comparable to style C stucco also appear on portable media including glass, rock crystal, and ceramics, both glazed and unglazed (e.g., the bevel-cut glass illustrated in Carboni and Whitehouse 2001: 171–193, nos. 77–98). These styles appear to be most common in regions with a connection to Abbasid Iraq and are hardly encountered in Umayyad Spain.

Economic considerations are of more direct relevance when looking at the distribution of the different decorative media across Samarra. Predictably, imported hardwoods and marble are encountered only in restricted contexts, such as the congregational mosques and the quarters of the palaces occupied by the caliph and his family. High costs of manufacture also limited the use of luster-painted tiles and mosaic. The difficulty of procuring large volumes of fuel, for example, in the form of brushwood, partially explains the widespread preference for mud brick and *pisé* over baked brick as a building material. Baked brick was reserved for the religious buildings and the most architecturally ambitious sections of palaces; not surprisingly these are the few structures that remain above ground level.

The provision of human resources also had an impact on the character of the architecture and decoration in Samarra. Many buildings, particularly those made principally of mud brick or *pisé*, could have been constructed with large teams of unskilled manpower – soldiers, prisoners, slaves, and agricultural laborers – but trained artisans were required for the manufacture of baked brick and the addition of decorative media onto walls, floors, and vaults. The demand for wood carvers, tilemakers, mosaicists, stucco workers, and masons evidently exceeded the capacity of the craft sector of Iraq; al-Muʿtasim is known to have sent to the governors of his provinces for skilled workmen in the early years of the construction (Yaʿqubi, translated in Northedge 2005a: 268, 271). It is conceivable that the interactions between the artisans and craft practices from different parts of the Islamic world contributed to the pace of artistic change and the degree of stylistic diversity.

Architectural Ornament in Late Antiquity and Early Islam

To what extent do the modes of architectural decoration encountered in Samarra represent a new departure? Alternatively, should we see the evidence from this city merely as a logical extension of ornamental traditions of the previous centuries, a gradual drift away from late antique prototypes (from style A through C) culminating later on in the so-called arabesque? It is certainly possible to find considerable areas of continuity with the ornamental characteristics of buildings constructed earlier in the Islamic period, and links can also be made to the monuments of late antiquity. Given the presence in Samarra of workshops drawn from many regions it is important to maintain a broad geographical focus when looking for the origins of technical features or styles in the architectural decoration of the city. Samarra seems to represent the last gasp for some modes of ornament – glass mosaic is a good example – in early Islamic architecture, while for others, such as glazed tiles and carved and molded stucco, we appear to be witnessing a formative stage in a long process of creative experimentation. In the case of glazed tiles one only need look at the tentative employment of this medium at Raqqa in Syria (Daiber and Becker 2004: pl. 13.f) to appreciate the technical and aesthetic sophistication achieved a few decades later at Samarra. Conversely, the paintings of Samarra do not seem to be more finely executed than their fragmentary counterparts in Raqqa (Daiber and Becker 2004: pl. 16.b, 27.c, d), and lack the invention of the best frescos of the Umayyad period. In addition to introducing a new facial type in human figures, Samarran painting is significant in that it illustrates the rise of a more abstract style dominated by heavy outlines, flat application of bold colors, and an interest in repeat patterns (perhaps influenced by Sasanian and Central Asian prototypes).

Samarra exhibits extensive evidence for sculptural ornamentation in stucco. There is general agreement concerning the presence of three main styles of stucco (styles A, B, and C), detailed above. The last of these, the "beveled style," is also seen in Samarran marble and wood. The first two styles of carving, A and B, have close correlations in broadly contemporary and earlier architectural decoration of the Islamic period. Michael Meinecke identifies the intimate relationships between Samarran style A and carved stucco panels from Madinat al-Far in northern Syria and a palatial residence at al-ʿAlwiya, located northwest of Mecca, near to the Darb Zubayda (Meinecke 1992: 229–230). The Darb Zubayda was the principal route of the *hajj* (Muslim pilgrimage) from southern Iraq, and many of the structures along this important road resulted from the patronage of prominent figures of the early Abbasid period, most notably Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809) and his consort, Zubayda. The largest assemblage of stucco comparable to style A, however, is to be found at Raqqa in the palatial quarter established to the north of the walled city of Rafiqa (founded in 771) (Figure 7.5). The palaces themselves appear to be largely associated with Harun al-Rashid during the period that he made the urban area of Raqqa–Rafiqa into his imperial residence (between 793 and 808).

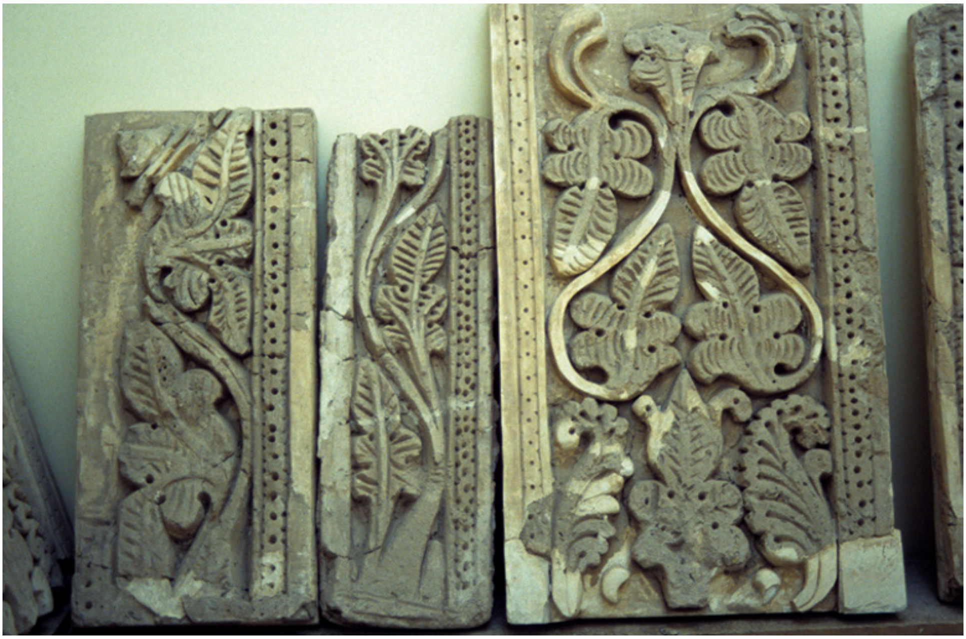

FIGURE 7.5 Carved stucco panels from the palaces north of Rafiqa (Raqqa), Syria, late eighth–early ninth centuries. Source: Marcus Milwright. Reproduced with permission.

The palaces probably fell out of use soon after this time. A painted inscription from "palace B" (Daiber and Becker 2004: 85, pls. 28.d, 29.a–d) has been associated with caliph al-Muʿtasim although this reading is unlikely. On all three sites there was a preference for placing the carved stucco in relatively narrow vertical panels, for example, framing internal doorways. Excavations of the Raqqan palaces also revealed the presence of vegetal forms carved in the round (Daiber and Becker 2004: pl. 17.b–d; Meinecke 1992: figs. 1, 2).

Both style A and B sought to break up the larger rectangular spaces into smaller sections enclosed within relatively simple geometric frames. This process is also in evidence at Raqqa, and can be found in different forms elsewhere in the eighth century. Meinecke identifies further examples in Iraq: at Hira, Ctesiphon, Tall al-Ghariri, and Sumaka (1992: 230–232). From Iran there are examples of palatial structures with ambitious stucco ornament, such as Chal-Tarkhan, straddling the last decades of the Sasanian Empire (224–651) and the early Islamic period (Thompson 1976). It is notable, however, that the decorative forms within the frames vary considerably across these examples, suggesting the existence of several distinct styles of carving (and potentially workshops of artisans) in the eighth and ninth centuries. Furthermore, it is difficult to find evidence in this group of the fluid, interlocking "leaf" forms that characterize Samarran style B. There are examples of style B designs in the palaces of Raqqa (Daiber and Becker 2004: pl. 86.b–e), and they also appear in the stucco carving of the Masjid-i Taʾrikh in Balkh, Afghanistan (redated to the late eighth century in Adle 2011). Elements of styles A and B appear in the carved stucco of the soffits of the arches in the mosque of Ibn Tulun (877–879) in Cairo.

The case of style C is more complicated. Meinecke found evidence in Raqqa that might suggest an earlier date for the introduction of the beveled style. A panel of stucco molded in the beveled style was recovered from excavations of an unidentified building east of the walls of Rafiqa (Daiber and Becker 2004: 60, pl. 16.c; Meinecke 1992: 234, fig. 25). Another stucco section appears in the mihrab of the congregational mosque of Rafiqa. The same carving style also appears in other media, including pottery and wood, from Raqqa. Most significant is a niche (made from a reused classical sarcophagus) from the mausoleum of Uways al-Qarani (Daiber and Becker 2004: pl. 14.a, b). Meinecke concludes that these three examples of the beveled style do not date from the period of Harun al-Rashid, and can most probably be associated with the residence of caliph al-Muʿtasim in Raqqa–Rafiqa in 837–838 (1992: 232–233). If this interpretation is accepted, then it means that the beveled style was already in use at the time of the foundation of Samarra. The beveled style can also be seen in the mosque of Rafiqa and an undated stucco cornice in Rusafa around the apse of the church known as Basilica A (Meinecke 1992: 233–235).

Stucco decoration is a prominent feature of Umayyad architecture, particularly in the so-called desert castles (now usually described collectively as the *qusur*). The richest survivals are from the sites of Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (720s) on the road from Damascus to Palmyra and Khirbat al-Mafjar (740s) near Jericho. These buildings are notable for the presence of figural sculptures carved in the round as well as panels and window grilles with repeated decoration. The range of ornamental themes is considerable, including human forms, animals, vegetation, and geometric shapes (Talgam 2004). Many of the modes of decoration found in Umayyad stucco are also apparent in stone carving from contemporary buildings in Jordan such as Mshatta, Qasr Hallabat, and the “audience hall” of the Amman citadel. To summarize a complex picture: the different modes of carved ornament – principally stucco, stone, and wood – of the Umayyad period represent a creative synthesis of pre-existing late antique styles and motifs. Thus, it is possible to detect elements of Persian, Syrian, Coptic, and southern Arabian workmanship.

Terry Allen contends that even style C (the beveled style) cannot be regarded as a true innovation of the Islamic period; he points to the sinuous quality of the carving of the abstracted plant forms on some sixth-century column capitals from the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, and argues that the visual characteristics of Samarran and other early Islamic ornament can be traced to the arts of late antiquity (1988: 11–12, fig. 21). Certainly there is some truth to this viewpoint, and in the case of style A, at least, one can detect many points of comparison with stucco, stone, and wood carving from the fifth to the early seventh centuries. In the case of style C, however, it is simply too distinct – in terms of the unnatural treatment of the motifs and the degree of spatial ambiguity – from its predecessors for one to maintain that it is simply an offshoot of the repeated patterns of late antiquity. What is less certain, however, is whether style C did in fact originate in Samarra or earlier in Bagdad. Gülru Necipoğlu has sought to locate this mode of ornament within the intellectual life of ninth-century Iraq, and particularly the rise of the rationalist Muʿtazilite school of thought during the caliphate of al-Maʾmun (r. 813–833). In their assertion of the divine unity (*tawhid*) of God, the Muʿtazilis sought to emphasize the divine essence and deny the attachment of any anthropomorphic characteristics to that essence (Necipoğlu 1995: 93–96. Also Tabbaa 2001: 74–77). One can imagine how the abstraction of the beveled style might have found an appreciative audience among the Muʿtazilis, though it should be admitted that we possess no textual evidence to indicate that this was the case. Palaces like Balkuwara demonstrate that style C stucco was flourishing by the 850s but do not tell us about the situation in earlier decades.

Samarra and Later Modes of Islamic Architectural Ornament

Many of the decorative themes and media found in Samarra continue to be employed in later phases of Islamic architecture. Those that deserve most attention are painting, tilework, and stucco, while style C, the beveled style, persists in a variety of media. The evidence for architectural painting in subsequent centuries is constrained by the poor survival of frescos in secular architecture. Poetry written at the Ghaznavid court (977–1186) describes complex painted designs in palaces (Meisami 2001b). The general veracity of this literary evidence is supported by the recovery of polychromatic designs from Lashkari Bazar, near Bust in Afghanistan and, more recently, the Qarakhanid period (999–1211) paintings from the citadel of Samarqand (Karev 2005). Three-dimensional figural sculpture is also known from this period, and the extant examples usually exhibit signs of painting to pick out elements of the costumes. Domestic architecture contained frescos, and numerous representational and abstract designs have been published from the Persian city of Nishapur (Wilkinson 1986: 159–185, 202–218, 242–258, 264–309, color pls. 3–33). In all of these examples there is the same preference for bold black outlines, flat areas of primary colors, and the application of surface patterns. Comparisons can be sought not just with Samarra but with Buddhist art in Central Asia from the fifth to the eighth centuries. Fragments of architectural painting also survive from Fatimid Cairo (969–1171), although these suggest the existence of a rather separate tradition with its roots in the Mediterranean region. The existence of two distinct styles, one Egyptian and the other Iraqi, is suggested by the account of a competition between two painters in the court of a Fatimid vizier (al-Maqrizi translated in Ettinghausen 1942: 112).

Glazed tiles are very rare in the early Abbasid phase but later come to be ubiquitous across the Islamic world. The early developments in the use of tiles and glazed brick plugs are largely in the Islamic East, often used in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to produce a decorative accent against the muted colors of baked or mud brick. The principal glaze colors are deep blue, turquoise, and white (on the early phase of architectural tilework, see Pickett 1997: 21–33). The new phase of decorative brickwork and tilework in the Seljuq period (*c.* 1040–1157) and under the Seljuq successor states, which lies beyond the scope of this chapter, marked the diminished persistence of Samarra type ornament, along with the introduction of a different "facial type" in figural representations.

In retrospect, the beveled style had gained considerable popularity in Samarra by the 850s, and it may have come into being in the 830s depending on the interpretation of the archaeological evidence from Raqqa. While the precise chronology of this early phase remains unclear, it is possible to trace with greater certainty the persistence of versions of the beveled style in woodwork, stucco, marble, and glass between the late ninth and the fourteenth centuries. Equally remarkable is the geographical spread of the surviving designs, which, to quote only the datable examples assembled by Richard Ettinghausen (1952), encompasses the wooden *maqsura* of the congregational mosque of Qayrawan (1016–1062) in the west, and the doors of the mausoleum of Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 998–1030) near Ghazni, Afghanistan, in the east. The stucco decoration of a Tulunid period (868–905) house in al-ʿAskar district of Cairo illustrates the early dissemination of the beveled style; this example is, like the surviving panels from Raqqa, notable for its closeness to Samarran prototypes and for the fact that it was molded rather than carved (El-Harawy 1932–1933: 82–85, pls. VI, VIII.b). In later periods stucco ornamented in the beveled style appears to have been primarily carved, but it retains the broadly abstracted quality, the curvilinear interlocking forms, and the practice of cutting into the surface at an oblique angle.

It is apparent that the beveled style soon became incorporated into the visual vocabularies of workshops across the Islamic world, particularly in the Abbasid territories and those of their vassals. Beveled ornament was often combined with other modes, in an eclectic manner, which is not anticipated by the somewhat homogeneous revetments of many of the buildings of Samarra. Thus, the beveled style became part of a wider repertoire of repeat patterns available to craftsmen and their patrons from the tenth century onward. However, the bulk of the published examples from the post-Samarran period come from the eleventh and twelfth centuries with a geographical concentration in the regions of Mesopotamia and Iran. The preference for the beveled style seems to have carried little ideological charge or sense of confessional allegiance, if we are to judge by its appearance in buildings commissioned by both Shiʿa and Sunni patrons. If the beveled style once possessed an association with Muʿtazilite beliefs, this was probably forgotten soon after the end of the Samarran period. Ettinghausen suggests that this distinct type of carving was able to compete with the more sophisticated decorative modes that evolved from the eleventh century because of the animated and sculptural qualities of the beveled style and the fact that these patterns were relatively straightforward to plan and execute in any medium (1952: 83).

While the survival of the beveled style is an intriguing phenomenon, it is of minor significance when seen in the context of the evolution of early Islamic architectural decoration. Assessing the surviving stucco carving from the tenth, eleventh, and early twelfth centuries, it is apparent that elements of Samarran styles A, B, and C were fused together to form new ornamental modes in different regions of the Islamic world. A few examples can illustrate this process. One of the most extensive decorative programs of the tenth century comes from the Masjid-i Jamiʿ in the Iranian town of Naʾin. In this case the dominant theme in the stucco of the prayer hall is a miniaturized version of style A, though the spandrels of the arch leading to the *maqsura* and the lower hood of the mihrab both contain bold, interlocking designs that echo elements of style B. By comparison, the eleventh-century decoration of the Pa Minar Mosque in Zavareh seems to draw more from styles B and C; particularly notable are the large scale of the individual plant forms, and the rhythmic, linear quality of the compositions. The convex vegetal elements in the mihrab hoods are regularly pierced with geometric designs; this elaboration on the practice in style B of drilling repeated holes in the surface of each shape is encountered in many eastern Islamic stucco designs in the eleventh century and later. The stucco of Nishapur retains aspects of Samarran styles, but one can also detect the presence of more ambitious geometry in laying out the designs (Wilkinson 1986: *passim*). The eleventh-century stucco carving of the prayer hall in the Azhar Mosque in Cairo provides evidence for alternative lines of evolution from the prototypes of ninth-century Iraq. In these panels, the cutting of the stucco is perpendicular to the surface, thus avoiding the spatial ambiguities of style C. It is possible to detect, however, elements of style B in the treatment of leaves, stems, and palmettes.

To conclude, the principal importance of Samarra in the present context is the fact that it represents the most complete evidence we possess for the practices of ornamentation, particularly in secular architecture, from the ninth century. While it is conceivable that the beveled style was first developed in this city or Baghdad, a Syrian origin remains a possibility.

We should be cautious in overestimating the significance of Samarra in the evolutionary processes that culminated during the eleventh century in the creation of complex two- and three-dimensional geometric designs; the repeat patterns found in ninth-century Samarra are governed by relatively simple principles – based around contiguous or overlapping equilateral triangles, hexagons, and circles – which are already in use in late antiquity and are further developed in Umayyad architecture. The *muqarnas* vault and the flat interlace patterns based around multiple lines of symmetry (often known as *girih* or *gereh*) rely upon innovations in mathematics that occurred after the ninth century (Necipoğlu 1995: 97–110, 140–152; Tabbaa 2001: 77–102). Where Samarran ornament is much more important, however, is in illustrating the drive to dissolve the distinction between foreground and background and to create undulating, curvilinear shapes that maintain only a notional relationship to plant forms in the natural world. The fusion of stylistic elements found in the architectural decoration of Samarra was an important stage in a process ultimately leading to the wide range of continuously repeating vegetal designs (often known by the term "arabesque") that are such a famous feature of the visual traditions of the Islamic world.

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8

The China–Abbasid Ceramics Trade during the Ninth and Tenth Centuries: Chinese Ceramics Circulating in the Middle East

Hsueh-man Shen

Since their discovery in the Gulf region and East Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese ceramics have captivated the attention of numerous scholars of Islamic and East Asian art. Various types of early Chinese trade ceramics have been identified from port city sites such as Siraf and Hormuz (Iran) on the north shore, and Sohar (Oman) on the south shore of the Gulf (Rougeulle 1991). Additionally, Chinese ceramics have also been found at settlement sites in Samarra (Iraq) and Fustat (Egypt), both of which were conveniently connected to the ocean via inland waterways (Mikami 1987–1988, v.2: 29–53).

Among those excavation sites, Siraf stands out for the relatively large quantity of Chinese ceramics found on the site. Situated in the middle of the Gulf coast on the Iranian side, the port of Siraf became one of the most important entrepôts in the region and reached its apogee in the ninth and tenth centuries, in response to the rapid expansion of marine trade between the Gulf and China. Through Siraf passed trade goods such as silks and ceramics from China, spices and aromatic woods of India and Indonesia, the ivory and gold of Africa, and locally made pottery and glass from the Gulf region. Excavation of the site yielded a significant number of Chinese ceramics distributed across the subsites of the mosque, the

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bazaar, and several houses. These Chinese ceramics typically belonged to either containers or tableware types in terms of shapes and functions. Interestingly, the relative quantity of Islamic glazed ware from the same sites is about tenfold that of the Chinese glazed ware, indicating the flooding of the market with the readily available, probably much cheaper Islamic glazed substitutes for Chinese ceramics, with only a small component of the luxurious Chinese glazed ware present (Tampoe 1989: 84–86).

Chinese ceramics differed significantly from those produced locally in the region, with their fine clay fabrics fired to temperatures above 1250 °C, resulting in hard, vitrified stoneware bodies and a well-fused glaze. The durability as well as aesthetic appeal of these wares then resulted in their export as storage containers and tableware. The fact that early Chinese trade ceramics were found in the palace compound rather than commoners' houses in Samarra – capital city of the Abbasid caliphate from 836 to 892 that continued to prosper in the tenth century – confirms that these fine products from China were made available to those residing in the Abbasid capital as soon as they were imported to the region, and were highly valued at the court.

Study of the assemblage of Chinese ceramics in excavated sites allows scholars to reconstruct the distribution pattern of these valuable goods. The Chinese trade ceramics found in Siraf belonged to five major groups, namely (a) grayish celadon wares, (b) white stonewares, (c) iron and/or copper painted stonewares, (d) green-splashed whitewares, and (e) miscellaneous low-fired lead-glazed earthenwares. Based on close examination of the clay body and glaze of the excavated shards, and through comparison with comparable finds from within China, scholars identified the first three groups as from the Yue kilns in Zhejiang province along the southeastern coast of China, the Xing and Ding kilns in the northern province of Hebei, and Changsha kilns in Hunan province in South China (Mikami 1987–1988, v.3: 74–96; Tampoe 1989: 47–68). The northern Chinese provenance for the latter two types, however, remained a subject of scholarly debate until supporting evidence surfaced with the discovery of a Tang dynasty shipwreck outside of the Belitung Island (Indonesia) in recent years (Hsieh 2010b; Krahl 2010).

An identical combination of ceramic types was found in Samarra, showing that Chinese ceramics were transported up the Tigris River from the ports of Basra and Siraf on the Gulf (Rougeulle 1996: 162; Sarre 1925: 54–77). Notably, these specific types of ceramics were also found in the port city site of Yangzhou (Jiangsu province) in the southeast coast of China. This compositional similarity and the fact that very few sites outside of Yangzhou have yielded comparable types of ceramics suggest a strong connection between these particular types of ceramics and the export market. Since the late 1970s excavations of settlements and tombs in the city of Yangzhou have yielded hundreds of thousands of shards datable to the ninth and tenth centuries. Approximately 30 percent of them belong to Changsha ware, and another 30 percent or so are Yue and Yue-type greenwares.

Whitewares of northern origin, including Gongxian ware from Henan, and Xing and Ding wares from Hebei, were also found in large quantities. Additionally, large turquoise-glazed jugs from western Asia – both fragmented and intact – were unearthed in Yangzhou, reaffirming the maritime trade connecting Yangzhou and the Abbasid caliphate via the Indian Ocean (Qin 1992: 66–72; Yangzhou 1996: 14–17, color pls. 1–3, and pls. 32, 35–36, 42, 49–82).

Stretching from the coast of East Africa up to the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean comprises six different seas commonly referred to as the Red Sea, the Gulf, Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, the Java Sea, and the South China Sea. It provides major sea routes connecting the Near East, Middle East and Africa, with China and Japan in the East. The powerful monsoons blowing across the Indian Ocean allow ships to sail westwards early in the season, then wait a few months and return eastwards. Archaeological evidence shows that regular trade relations utilizing the monsoonal climate in the greater Indian Ocean region developed between Roman Egypt and southern India in around the first century CE. Written accounts of the adventures undertaken by the monks Faxian (fl. 350–414) and Yijing (635–713) to India in quest of the Buddhist truth documented the use of a sailing route through the South China Sea and Bay of Bengal. While trade from China to western Asia carried by Persian and Arab traders began in around the fifth century, regular imports of Chinese ceramics to the region did not occur until the late eighth century. In the subsequent two centuries, the trade connections continued to expand and extended to East Africa. Large quantities of Chinese ceramics were shipped to the region in exchange for luxury goods from the West that were highly desirable in China, including pearls, ivory, rhinoceros horn, frankincense, spices, and gemstones.

Made for Export: Evidence from the Belitung Shipwreck, *c.* Ninth Century

In 1998 an Indonesian sea-cucumber diver stumbled across a mound of ceramics on the seabed off the coast of Belitung, a small island in the Java Sea. Soon after establishing the Chinese origin and a Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) date for these preliminary finds, a swift excavation of the site was carried out. The excavation then yielded a merchant ship and a cargo revealing substantial new information about the medieval maritime trade conducted on the Indian Ocean. More than 60 000 objects were retrieved from underwater, and nearly the entire surviving cargo – estimated to weigh in the order of 25 metric tons – consisted of Chinese ceramics. Other types of Chinese trade goods in the wreck included bronze mirrors, gold and silver wares, spices (anises), and silver ingots. Chinese coins and a Changsha bowl bearing the date equivalent to 826 provide a *terminus post quem* (point after which the group must date), whereas typological and stylistic analysis of the ceramics on board further establishes a date within the second quarter of the ninth century for the cargo (Wilson and Flecker 2010). While more than 95 percent of the cargo contents were Chinese in origin, examination of the hull remains confirms that it was made of woods imported from East Africa. Moreover, the joinings of the timbers were constructed with perforations and lashings rather than nails – a construction method (the so-called sewn-plank method) very different from traditional Chinese shipbuilding techniques, but commonly used in the region surrounding Siraf and Sohar during the period in concern – suggesting that it was an Arab dhow (Flecker 2010). Thus, the ship itself together with its contents substantiate the existence of a maritime trade route from China to the Gulf and beyond as early as the ninth century, a trade otherwise documented in contemporary texts.

The vast majority (about 57 500) of the ceramic cargo consisted of iron-painted utensils originating from the Changsha kilns. Relatively small numbers of ceramics from other regions made up the balance, and they included green-glazed Yue tablewares from Zhejiang on the east coast of China, large storage jars from Guangzhou on the south coast, fine white-glazed stonewares from Hebei and Henan in the north, and green-splashed white stoneware possibly from the Gongxian kilns in Henan. Primary sources, including a mid-ninth-century record by the Arab merchant Sulayman and one by the Chinese geographer Jia Dan (d. 805), describe a maritime route leading from Siraf to Muscat (Oman) and on to Kollam (India), through the Strait of Malacca, then along the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula, and finally Guangzhou in present-day Guangdong province of China (al-Sirafi 1983: 7; Chen 1996: 84–85; Zhang 1986: 42–43).[1] The Arab geographer Ibn Khurradadhbih (839–912) also lists in his *Kitab al-masalik wa'l-mamalik* (Book of Routes and Kingdoms) a sequence of seaports leading to China, including the present-day Hanoi (Vietnam), Guangzhou, and Yangzhou (Ibn Khurradadhbih 1991: 71–72). In light of the Belitung cargo's components, which correspond closely to the combination of ceramic finds from Yangzhou, it is believed that the ship loaded the bulk of its merchandise and set sail from Yangzhou for Siraf, with a possible stopover at Guangzhou (Hsieh 2010a).

Several facts about the Belitung cargo intrigued scholars of the history of the maritime trade of ceramics, who had relied primarily on textual sources for their study of the subject. First and foremost is the unprecedented scale of production and the fact that it catered to Western taste, which is completely lacking from historical records. As described earlier, the cargo was dominated by Changsha wares – mostly hand-painted fluidly in red, brown, or green colors – that were decorated with a wide variety of motifs ranging from floral patterns to anthropomorphic forms such as fish and birds (Figure 8.1). Some were even inscribed with poems or popular sayings written in the Chinese script, while others were painted with pseudo-Arabic phrases. Those Changsha wares sought to appeal to their Middle Eastern clientele through a combined use of lively polychromy and somewhat exotic surface designs accentuating their Chinese origin. In a similar manner, potters from Gongxian (Henan province) and Hebei responded to the

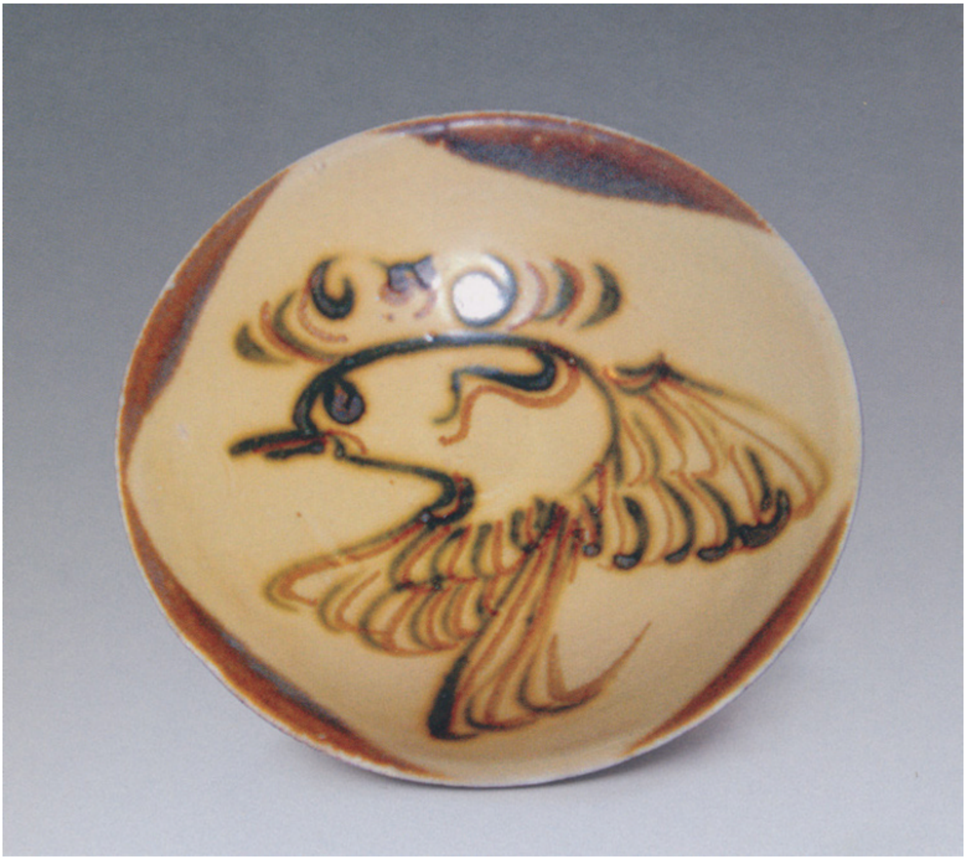

FIGURE 8.1 Bowl painted in brown and green with bird. Chinese, *c.* ninth century, Changsha ware, diameter 20 cm. From the Belitung shipwreck. Source: After Li 2004: vol. 2, pl. 531.

aesthetic interests of their clients in the distant West by introducing green splashes to existing whiteware, and further adorned them in fine-line incision with motifs adopted and adapted from the Middle East (Shen 2014).

The remarkable speed at which goods and ideas traveled from one end to the other of the Indian Ocean becomes apparent when one compares those Chinese blue-and-white wares salvaged from the Belitung wreck with their Iraqi counterparts. To take an intact piece from the Belitung cargo as an example (Figure 8.2), the lozenge and surrounding foliage depicted in blue at the center of the bowl is a Chinese translation of the Iraqi prototype (possibly from ninth-century Basra). During the "translation" process, the crude earthenware of the Mesopotamian original was replaced by a more refined stoneware made in China. However, the Iraqi low-fired earthenware covered in opaque white tin glazes was, in itself, a copy of high-fired Chinese white stoneware, which was achieved

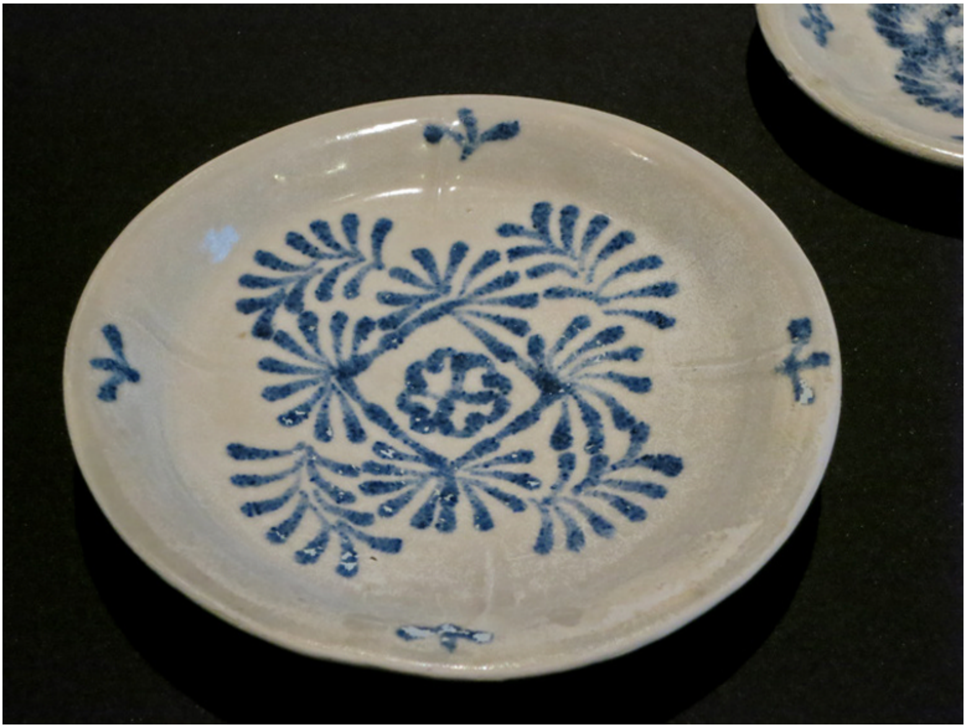

Figure 8.2 Dish painted in blue with a lozenge and foliage. Chinese, *c.* ninth century, Gongxian ware, diameter 23 cm. From the Belitung shipwreck. Asian Civilisation Museum, Tang Shipwreck Collection, Singapore. Source: Photo courtesy of June C. Chu. Reproduced with permission.

by employment of fine clay material and colorless glaze. It seems that soon after the Chinese white stoneware arrived in the Middle East, a local version made of earthenware covered in opaque white tin glaze was created. In some cases, the white-glazed earthenwares were further embellished with blue décor as a response to local taste and preferences (Crowe 1975–1977: 263–267).[2] These Middle Eastern blue-and-white wares were soon made known to the Chinese, who then produced a close copy of them. As soon as the copies were made in China, they were fed back to the Middle East, where the originals were first created. Given the amount of time needed for the crew and goods to travel across the Indian Ocean, those decisions and products were made almost instantly when goods or ideas arrived from the other end of the trade route (Guy 2010: 24–27; Hallett 2010; Shen 2014).

After the end of the rebellion by the general An Lushan (755–763), the Tang bureaucracy was decentralized, and many parts of China fell under the rule of powerful warlords. By 907, the Tang Empire dissolved into a string of short-lived regimes controlling northern China, and with semi-independent kingdoms ruling different parts of southern China. At the same time, the Liao (907–1125), a powerful northern empire founded by the Khitan nomads, arose and assumed connections with the western part of the Eurasian continent via trade routes built along the steppe region. It was not until 960 when the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) was established that central and southern parts of China were reunited.

In exchange for political alliance and economic ties, those semi-independent local powers were compelled to accept one another as well as foreign states as equals, contributing to drastic socioeconomic changes in medieval China. Local products like ceramics were traded in significant quantities for diplomacy as well as commerce. With growing demands, new kilns sprang up in many provinces, and those that had primarily made low-fired tomb figurines before now changed to making high-fired tablewares and other utilitarian ceramics. By the beginning of the ninth century, fine ceramics like the Yue and Xing ware, ceramics characterized by their respective likeness to jade and to silver, were repeatedly referred to in Chinese poetry as symbols of beauty, elegance, taste, novelty, and wealth (Krahl 2010). Also, both textual and material evidence show that the highly prized Yue celadon wares produced in the southeastern coastal kingdom of Wuyue (907–978) were sent to the Liao court in the north as precious gifts in exchange for protection – possibly via the sea route along the east coast of China (Hino 1989; Worthy 1983). Following a string of wars between Song and Liao, the routes of migration and the circulation of goods moved across the Song–Liao borders in northern China. As a result of the Treaty of Shanyuan in 1005, the Liao received annually from the Song large quantities of cash and silk. With this steady stream of wealth, the Liao could afford to buy luxurious items from the Song, including delicate Yue wares from Zhejiang province, fine greenwares from Shaanxi, whitewares from Hebei, and *qingbai* (literally bluish-white) wares from Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province (Shiba 1983).

Also following the socioeconomic changes that occurred during the mid-eighth century, the Chinese economy shifted its center from the northern capital cities of Chang'an (modern Xi'an in Shaanxi province) and Luoyang (Henan province) to the south, where large sums of wealth rapidly accumulated thanks to the rapid expansion of the Chinese maritime trade with the Gulf region in the ninth century. The development gave rise to port cities like Yangzhou and Mingzhou (modern Ningbo in Zhejiang province) in the southeastern coast and Guangzhou in the extreme south. Strategically located at the point where the Yangtze River drains into the East China Sea, and where the Yangtze River meets the Grand Canal, Yangzhou rose in the latter half of the eighth century and remained a major hub for maritime trade through the fourteenth century. Textual sources show that a notable number of Persian and Arabic-speaking merchants were present in Yangzhou in the first half of the eighth century, and the number increased rapidly after the mid-eighth century. These foreign merchants are reported to have set up stores known as "Persian shops," specializing in the trading of foreign goods. It is likely that the Persian and Arab communities in Yangzhou served as middlemen, and were instrumental in the selection and purchase of ceramics for export to the Middle East (Chen 1992; Li 1992: 375, 378–381).

It is imaginable that with the guidance of the middlemen based in Yangzhou in eastern China, northern polychrome and whitewares were shipped via the Grand Canal to Yangzhou, where they were joined with the southern celadon wares from Zhejiang and polychrome stonewares from Hunan Changsha. Those goods were then carefully packed inside larger storage jars from Guangdong and loaded onto a ship destined for the West, which unfortunately sank outside of Belitung Island.

From Kilns to Ports to Destined Markets: Findings from Two Tenth-Century Shipwrecks

Apart from the Belitung wreck, two additional shipwrecks found in the Java Sea allow scholars to answer further questions concerning the nature and scope of the ceramics trade conducted on the Indian Ocean during the period in concern. Following its initial discovery in 1996, subsequent excavation of the Intan wreck in the open sea off the southeast coast of Sumatra brought to the surface over 8000 intact artifacts. They included a wide variety of materials ranging from metals, glass, ceramics, to organic materials such as animal bones and teeth, elephant tusks, worked ivory, and candle-nuts. Ceramics, mostly Chinese, accounted for the bulk of the nonperishable cargo and weighed an estimated 3.5 metric tons. Other bulk cargo items like bronze and tin weighed an additional 2 tons each.

Through identification of Chinese coins, stylistic studies of ceramics, and radiocarbon dating, the Intan ship is thought to have sunk between 918 and 960 CE. Despite the lack of a coherent hull remaining on the Intan site, scientific analysis carried out on the few pieces of wood samples identified them as belonging to a Southeast Asian wood. Moreover, the ship was held together with dowels, a technique traditionally associated with the Southeast Asian countries, especially Indonesia, suggesting its Southeast Asian provenance (Flecker 2002).

While the Yue celadon made in northeastern Zhejiang province is known to be fine and delicate in quality, those Yue-type wares produced in neighboring provinces like Anhui, Jiangxi, and Fujian are much simpler and less refined. In contrast to the ninth-century Belitung wreck, which had a few northern whitewares and high-quality southern celadon pieces among a primary cargo of export Changsha stoneware, the Intan wreck appears to have contained an export cargo dominated by the Yue and Yue-type tablewares as well as low to medium quality Guangdong and/or Fujian storage jars. It is noteworthy that small *qingbai* dishes from contemporaneous kilns in Jingdezhen were included in the cargo. The discovery indicates that Jingdezhen – the future capital of Chinese porcelain responsible for export of fine blue-and-white ware to the Middle East during the Mongol Yuan period – was involved in international trade as early as the tenth century.

These Chinese ceramics were accompanied by a number of Southeast Asian pots, including hundreds of Thai fine-paste-ware *kendi* (water jars) and bottles, and coarse wares of probable Indonesian origin. Middle Eastern amphora-type vessels were also stowed on the Intan ship; it is almost certain that those covered with a lustrous turquoise glaze were containers for date syrup, which was produced in Iraq and exported along the maritime routes.

Metal artifacts constituted a significant part of the Intan cargo. Thousands of ingots made of a variety of metals including tin, lead, bronze, and silver were found. Other types of metal objects on board included gold rings, coins, copper alloy sheets, ironware, bronze mirrors, and religious icons and ritual emblems made of cast bronze. While the ironware on board was likely to have come exclusively from China, other metal objects were assembled from different parts of Southeast Asia. For instance, the tin ingots are most likely to have come from the rich tin mines near Kedah on the Malay Peninsula. These findings may be associated with the high demand for precious metals coming from those fast-growing kingdoms in the region, especially the Javanese kingdom of Mataram. Religious objects also speak to the regional interaction between different cultures through the transmission of Buddhism and Hinduism.

While much of the cargo derived from China, it was probably not loaded there. Numerous tin ingots found extensively along the full length of the vessel were stacked beneath the Chinese ceramics. Such a stowage pattern suggests that the cargo was loaded at a place near where the ingots were sourced from, namely the Malay Peninsula. Therefore, instead of being loaded at a port near their place of production, the large quantities of Yue and Yue-type wares in the cargo are more likely to have been assembled at an entrepôt in Southeast Asia before being loaded onto the ship (Li 2007). The wide variety of artifacts, including products of China, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Middle East, also supports the hypothesis that the Intan ship took on a full mixed cargo at an entrepôt port in Southeast Asia. Therefore it seems that the Intan ship was an inter-island trading vessel bound to transport goods within the Java Sea region, rather than one designated for long-distance, direct trading between the eastern and the western ends of the Indian Ocean (Flecker 2002: 121–125; Guy 2003).

Like the Intan wreck, the shipwreck salvaged from some 100 kilometers off Cirebon on the north Java coast prompts a number of questions about the nature of tenth-century Indian Ocean trade as mediated by Southeast Asia's maritime commerce. The remains of the hull of the Cirebon ship were relatively well preserved, allowing archaeologists to reconstruct the vessel, whose transverse and longitudinal beams inside the cargo space formed compartments that could be leased to individual merchants joining the trading voyage. The hull also displayed features of the West Austronesian shipbuilding tradition and the lashed-lug technique with wooden dowels associated with boatbuilding traditions of Southeast Asia. Computational modeling resulted in a vessel measuring approximately 25 × 12 m with a cargo-carrying capacity of 685 m^3 (Liebner 2010: 23–34).

In addition to nearly 77 000 uncategorized batches of restorables, archaeologists registered more than 155 000 objects onboard the ship, and a large majority of them were Chinese ceramics. A Yue-ware bowl bearing a potter's mark dated 968 suggests that the ship sank in the late tenth century. While dominated by Chinese ceramics, base metals (in the form of ingots), metal artifacts and coins, glass, gemstones, and organic materials also formed a significant part of the cargo, providing material evidence for the complex trade connections between different parts of the Indian Ocean. For instance, found in the wreck was a sizeable amount of Chinese lead coinage from the Nanhan kingdom (917–971), proving contact with the area of present-day Guangdong and Guangxi in south China. Forty intact glass vessels found among 2000 glass shards – mostly blown in green or blue color – had constituents similar to the glassware from Iran under the Abbasid caliphate (Guillot 2009). Like the Intan cargo, large quantities of Malay tin ingots and spears made of tin were found on board the Cirebon ship. Two gold-plated daggers bore Arabic inscriptions indicating possible Arabian or Indian provenance,[3] while some other gold jewelry items were made in a distinctive Javanese style. Javanese bronze mirrors and Thai *kendi* jars further indicate ties with Southeast Asia. Gemstones like rubies and lapis lazuli that appeared in the amount of several hundred kilograms point to connections with Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, in addition to aromatic substances of Arabian, Indian, and Sumatran provenance.

Comprising similar elements to the Intan cargo, the Cirebon cargo – proposed to be around 300–350 metric tons – was much larger in size. Moreover, the dominance of Yue and Yue-type greenwares already observable in the Intan cargo is even more pronounced in the Cirebon wreck, making up some 97 percent of the entire ceramic cargo. In comparison, whitewares from central China (Henan and Anhui) accounted for only 2 percent of the remainder of the cargo (Liebner 2010: 34–41; Qin 2007: 99–101). Some of the fine Yue wares on board the Cirebon ship are comparable to those found in high-ranking tombs belonging to Chinese aristocrats. This phenomenon is not apparent in the Intan cargo and reflects an increasing interest and growing capacity on the consumers' part to afford top-end commodities from China.

The highly mixed origins of the Cirebon cargo made it specially challenging to determine where the cargo was loaded, and where the ship was destined. The ways in which the cargo items were distributed on the seabed suggested that the large quantities of Chinese ceramics were stored in the deeper sections of the ship's hold, whereas glassware and *kendi* were placed in the upper parts of the ship's cargo space. This loading pattern suggests two possibilities as regards the ship's port of departure: one is that the cargo was loaded in Mingzhou, a port near the Yue kilns in China; the other is that those Yue and Yue-type wares were assembled at a distribution center in Southeast Asia before being loaded onto the ship (Qin 2007: 95–96). The wide variety and large quantities of base metal (bronze, tin, lead, silver) on board the ship made Java the probable destination for the Cirebon ship, because of a well-documented shortage of materials associated with the Mataram kingdom based in central Java. In addition, the significant amount of Javanese religious objects with Hindu and/or Buddhist motifs also attests to the possible exchange between Java and the Chinese Wuyue kingdom, whose founding rulers were practicing Buddhists.

Unlike the Arab dhow of the Belitung wreck, the Cirebon and Intan wrecks were smaller Southeast Asian ships. However, they contained a ceramic cargo much larger in size than the Belitung ship, indicating a fast-growing demand abroad for Chinese ceramics in the tenth century. The cargo contents of these tenth-century ships also showed a major change of suppliers – kilns that produced ceramics in bulk to feed the overseas markets. The most noticeable change in this respect concerns Changsha ware – the previously dominant type of export ceramics, which disappeared completely by the tenth century – and Yue and Yue-type wares, which assumed a predominant role in place of Changsha ware. At the same time, pots coming from kilns in Jiangxi, Anhui, Guangdong, and Fujian – all concentrated on the south and southeastern coast of China – joined the circle of suppliers. Although northern whitewares remained visible in both of the tenth-century cargoes, their number was reduced even further. It appears that across all types and forms of ceramics, southern monochromes (mainly celadon) replaced those polychrome wares produced in Changsha (Hunan) and Gongxian (Henan), and became the most important types of export wares in the tenth century. Moreover, there was no longer a visible distinction in the shape and surface decoration between export wares and those produced for domestic consumption. This new development may be due to a deeper involvement of middlemen coming from Southeast Asia, who had Chinese backgrounds. It may also be related to intensified political difficulties, which resulted in the hindrance of trade across the borders between northern and southern China.

Rather than sailing directly to the Gulf, both the Intan and Cirebon ships were bound for a nearby port in Indonesia. Although the question of their port of origin remains unclear to us, it appears that during the tenth century, Southeast Asian countries participated actively in the transportation and exchange of goods in the broader Indian Ocean context. Entrepôt ports in the Java Sea and South China Sea region not only provided stations for a change of ships, or the addition of local goods, but also facilitated the reloading of goods assembled from major players in the Indian Ocean trade. Ceramics finds at sites like Mantai (Sri Lanka) and Banbhore (Pakistan), which are very similar in content to the wares discovered at Siraf, also indicate that Chinese ceramics were exported to the Middle East by way of South and Southeast Asia (Ashfaque 1969; Hsieh 2010a; Kerr and Wood 2004: 728–729; Mikami 1987–1988, v.1: 330–358; v.2: 32–37, 55–56). In all probability, these ships were sailing for a port on Java's north coast to unload a consignment of trade goods and take on goods assembled from the region, before proceeding to Sri Lanka and the Arabian Sea.

The Interwoven Network of Trade Routes

It is traditionally believed that after the Battle of Talas (751) between the Arab armies and those of the Tang dynasty, which took place in what is now Kazakhstan, China assumed a more conservative foreign policy towards the West, and consequently the Silk Road economy that had prospered along the overland routes in the previous centuries waned. However, both literary and archaeological evidence has indicated that terrestrial trade persisted across the Eurasian continent, though it assumed a different form: a small-scale, local trade conducted over small distances by peddlers, rather than a thriving long-distance trade. This kind of low-level trade involved limited traffic to distant places and few commodities of foreign origin (Hansen 2012: 137–139, 195–197, 237–242).

Meanwhile, from the late eighth century, a pilgrimage route from Tibet to Mount Wutai (in modern Shanxi province), which passed through the major hub and pilgrimage site of Dunhuang, saw an increase in traffic. This route not only facilitated the movement of pilgrims but also enabled growth of trade along China's northern frontiers. Envoys representing the rulers of Dunhuang, Khotan, and the Uighur Kaghanates traveled along the route to the Tang capital at Chang'an on gift-bearing missions, which involved exchange of Khotanese jade, Chinese silk and silver. Many of the emissaries going back and forth conducted trade on the side, dealing in goods like cotton textiles woven in Turfan and jade from Khotan. Property inventories surviving from the region show that large sums of imported textiles, metalware, incense and fragrance, and precious stones were gathered in the rich institutions of Buddhist monasteries. Among the recorded items, lapis lazuli (from Afghanistan), agate (from India), amber (from the Baltic region), coral (from the Indian Ocean via Tibet), and pearls (usually from Sri Lanka) were definite imports (Hansen 2012: 160–166, 186–187, 191–197).

Excavations at Nishapur, the capital of the Tahirid (821–873) and Saffarid (867–963) dynasties in northeastern Iran, also provide material evidence to supplement that from shipwrecks and texts. The site of Nishapur has yielded green-glazed Yue wares, painted Changsha wares, white Xing wares, white Gongxian wares, and green-splashed whitewares that are comparable to those unearthed from Yangzhou and the Belitung wreck. Also found at Nishapur are two cobalt blue glass plates with incised decoration (possibly from the eastern Islamic lands), which bear close resemblance to six others buried in the relic deposit (dated 874) underneath the foundations of the Pagoda of Famen Temple near Chang'an (Kröger 1995: 117–119). It is clear that despite political difficulties, trade connections between China and inland settlements like Nishapur in the heart of the Eurasian continent remained strong. Archaeological evidence also suggests that the connections even reached north and northeast China via the steppes. A bronze basin found in the joint burial (dated 1018) of the Liao Princess of the State of Chen and her consort in Naiman Banner, Inner Mongolia, stands as proof of the theory (Figure 8.3). Engraved with an angular Kufic inscription band along the interior of the rim and a six-pointed star on the bottom, this large bronze vessel (height: 19 cm; diameter of mouth: 57 cm) compares to a number of bronzes from Ghaznavid Afghanistan, thereby testifying to a network that joined desert and steppe routes in northern and inner Asia.

During the Liao dynasty, trade routes expanded and extended across the steppes in the northern part of Eurasia, reaching Korea in the east and the Baltic Sea in the west. The rich and diversified burial goods in the above-mentioned tomb of the Princess of the State of Chen testify to such extensive trade connections throughout Eurasia. Especially notable are the lavish necklaces, earrings, headdresses, pendants, and belt accessories carved out of amber (2101 pieces in total), which was most likely to have come from the Baltic region. By the first millennium CE, the Vikings inhabiting the Baltic shores had already begun to gather amber, trading it for fur into the Russian river systems controlled by the Bulghars, Rus, and Khazars who set up posts at Bulghar-on-the-Volga, Itil, Kiev, Novgorod, and Kazan. These networks then became entangled with the northern Muslim caliphates' trading posts taking goods to Constantinople, Baghdad, and Bukhara. An account by Ahmad Ibn Fadlan in 922 CE, a member of an embassy of the Abbasid caliph of Baghdad, who visited Bulghar-on-the-Volga, recorded that the Rus' soldiers and traders had their own trade warehouses set up for the exchange of amber, furs, wax, honey, livestock products, and slaves. In his *Ahsan al-taqasim fi maʿrifat al-aqalim* (The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions), the Arab geographer, al-Muqaddasi (b. *c.* 946) documented amber moving eastward to the Central Asian oases states. He included amber among a list of furs, weapons, wood, and live animals being exported from Bulghar through the lands of the Khazars and Oghuz into Khorezmia in 990 (Christian 1998: 296, 337, 340).

Most records of amber moving into Liao territory are documented as tribute from tribes inhabiting the lands of the Silk Road. The first Liao emperor Taizu (r. 907–926) set up trading posts and sent military expeditions to surrounding states demanding tribute. This structure allowed the Khitans not only to monopolize the trade passing through and around their territories but also to collect goods of jade, amber, agate, frankincense, fine carpets, cotton cloth, and bullion on a regular schedule. The tributaries included the Uighur kingdoms in modern-day Gansu and Xinjiang provinces of China, the kingdom of Khotan in the southern Taklamakan Desert, the kingdom of Kucha in the north Taklamakan, the Jurchen kingdom in Manchuria, and the Goryeo-dynasty Korea. The Liao people also

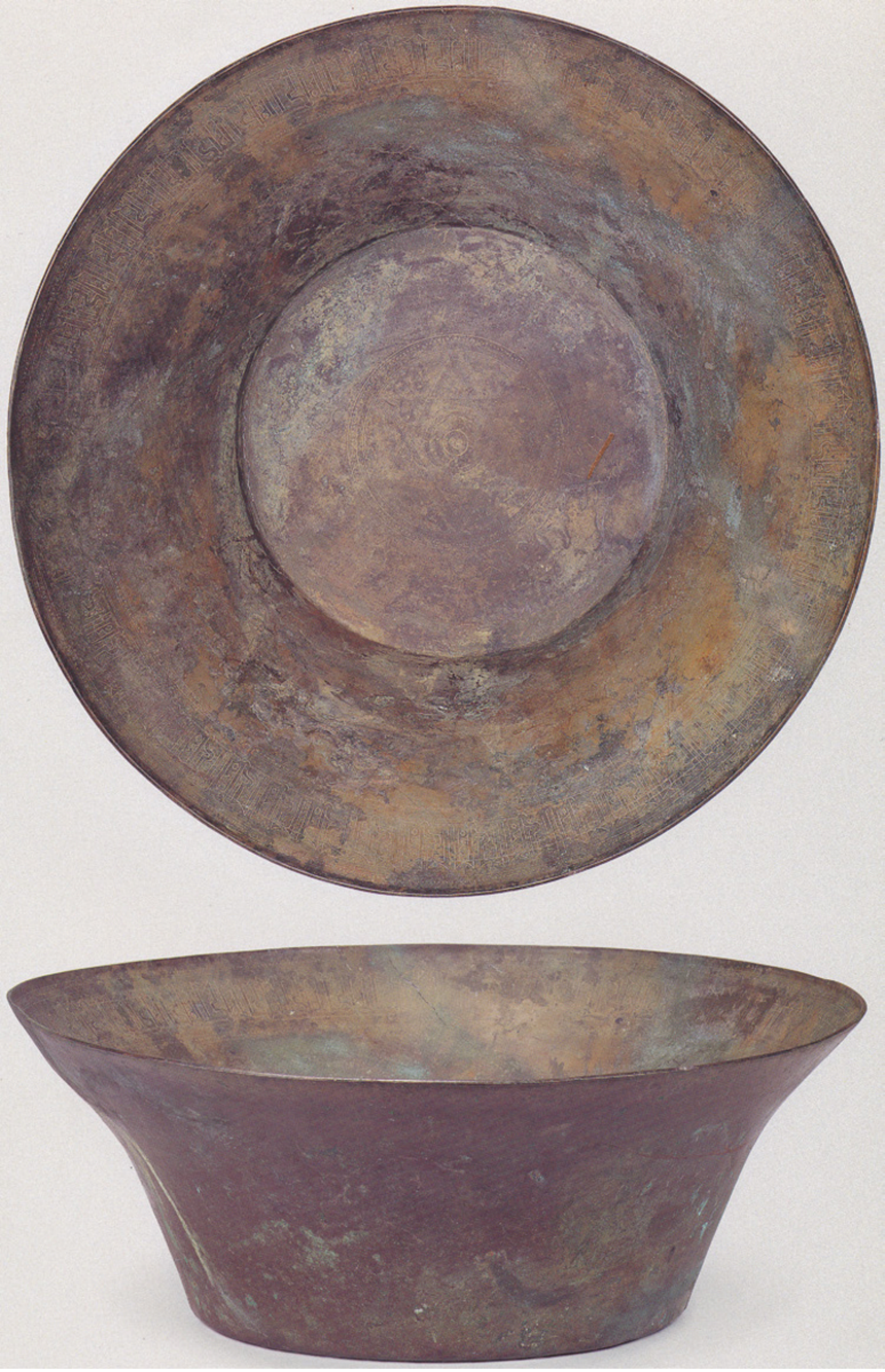

FIGURE 8.3 Basin engraved with an inscription along the rim and a six-pointed star on the bottom, Afghanistan, *c*. early eleventh century. Bronze, diameter 57 cm. From the tomb (dated 1018) of the Princess of the State of Chen and her consort in Naiman Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Source: After Zhongguo 2002: 312.

traded with their southern imperial neighbors, the Later Zhou (951–960) followed by the Northern Song dynasty (Shiba 1983: 97–98). Discovery of Khotanese jades, Song-dynasty silks and ceramics, South Asian rock crystal and pearls, Middle Eastern metal and glasswork in Liao aristocratic tombs, including the tomb of the Princess of the State of Chen, confirms the existence of a network of inland waterways and overland trading paths reaching different parts of Eurasia.

Although by the early seventh century a flourishing shipbuilding industry was turning out thousands of ocean-going junks in China, and many of them were able technically to undertake long-distance voyages, merchants preferred to restrict direct travel to a relatively limited sphere. When the Indian Ocean trade took off in the ninth century, foreign merchants from Arabia, India, and Iran settling in port cities of Yangzhou and Guangzhou readily served as middlemen charged with responsibility for the purchase of cargos like that carried by the Belitung wreck. Nonetheless, the role played by traders based at entrepôts in Southeast Asia was instrumental to smooth trading around the Indian Ocean. At these distribution centers, goods coming from all directions were stored, reassembled, and loaded into cargoes bound for many different ports. Within Southeast Asia, multiple ports competed to control the entrepôt trade for tax revenues. During the period in concern, Srivijaya (modern-day Palembang, on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia) was the most powerful maritime realm controlling the dominant entrepôt, before a raid on Srivijaya in 1025 by the Tamil Chola Empire from South India ended its domination of trade (Chaudhuri 1985: 50; Gordon 2008: 57–73).

It is commonly assumed that differences existed in the nature of the goods that traveled along terrestrial and maritime trade routes. That is, delicate and precious commodities like glass were brought into China in small quantities via the oasis route, while sturdy ceramics were shipped in bulk via the sea. The finds of Sasanian and Islamic glass in tombs and temples in north and northwestern China seem to substantiate the theory. One of the largest groups of such finds was the aforementioned reliquary deposit at Famen Temple, which included 19 intact Islamic glass vessels given by the imperial court as offerings to the Buddha in the hopes of gaining merits in return. Yet, glass found in Song and Liao dynasty tombs and pagoda relic deposits along the Chinese east coast suggest that the maritime route was used simultaneously for import of Islamic glass. To name but a few: the Jingzhi Temple Pagoda (977) and Jingzhong Monastery Pagoda (995) in Dingzhou (Hebei province), the tomb (1018) of the Princess of the State of Chen in Naiman Banner (Inner Mongolia), Wuwei Pagoda (1036) in Anhui province, Xianyan Temple Pagoda (1043) in Rui'an (Zhejiang province) contain notable examples of such finds, and they are all situated either along the coastline or conveniently connected to the coast via inland waterways (Kinoshita 2009; Shen 2002).

In fact, the Byzantine glass found on the Chinese east coast indicates that the sea route had already been used to facilitate glass trade in earlier periods. Archaeological evidence also shows that by the mid-tenth century, Islamic glass formed part of the Indian Ocean trade. In the Cirebon wreck, for instance, glass bottles or vases of Middle Eastern origin appeared in the number of hundreds, many in the form of vessel with a bulbous or a cylindrical body, a long, slightly tapering neck and a flared mouth. They are comparable to those found in the above Song and Liao sites – most notably to one from the Jingzhi Temple Pagoda (Figure 8.4), another one from the tomb of the Princess of the State of Chen (Zhongguo 2002: 228–229), and some others from Nishapur (Kröger 1995: 71–74, 81–82, 91–94, 126–128, 171–173). In the Intan wreck, shards of Middle Eastern glass vessels were discovered alongside hundreds of glass eye-beads, and several large blocks of dark green glass cullet. Interestingly, apart from one intact pale-blue bottle, all the other pieces were fragments of vessels, mostly bases and rims displaying a wide variety of colors. That the numbers of rims and bases do not match suggests that broken glass vessels formed part of the cargo, and they were intended for rework in Southeast Asia, where there was a glass-making tradition (Flecker 2002: 78–79, 87–89; Glover and Henderson 1995). The discovery of glass on board both of the tenth-century ships not only shows an increasing reliance on the maritime routes for the trading of Middle Eastern glass and the growing scope of glass trade around the Indian Ocean but also reaffirms the intermediary role of Southeast Asia in the China–Abbasid trade.

Conclusion

Frequent and continuous exchange of goods and ideas had an impact on the artistic exchange between the eastern and western regions of Asia during the ninth and tenth centuries. The Chinese ceramics flowing into Abbasid Iraq provoked a response from Iraqi potters. Copies were initially manufactured to help satisfy local demands, as exemplified by the Mesopotamian wares recovered from Samarra and in imitation of the white, green splashes on white, and lead-glazed *sancai* wares of Chinese origin (Sarre 1925: 66–77). At the same time, a continuous flux of ideas and decorative motifs arriving from the West inspired the Chinese potters, too.[4] Islamic glass, in particular, was an especially potent source of inspiration, providing a new repertoire of shapes, decorative motifs, as well as techniques of surface decoration. At the Yaozhou kilns near Chang'an, black-painted wares making reference to painted glass and pottery of Middle Eastern origin were produced in large quantities during the ninth and tenth centuries (Shaanxi 1992: vol. 2, pl. 91.3). Islamic glassware like the black-painted yellow plate from the crypt of the Famen Temple Pagoda may have served as a prototype for them. Likewise, the black-painted pottery from Nishapur, possibly inspired by the same type of painted glass, may have also contributed to the design of these Yaozhou pots (Kröger 1995: 114–115; Wilkinson 1973: 126, 192, 226).

Material evidence coming from different points along the maritime trade routes provides answers to different questions concerning the Indian Ocean trade during

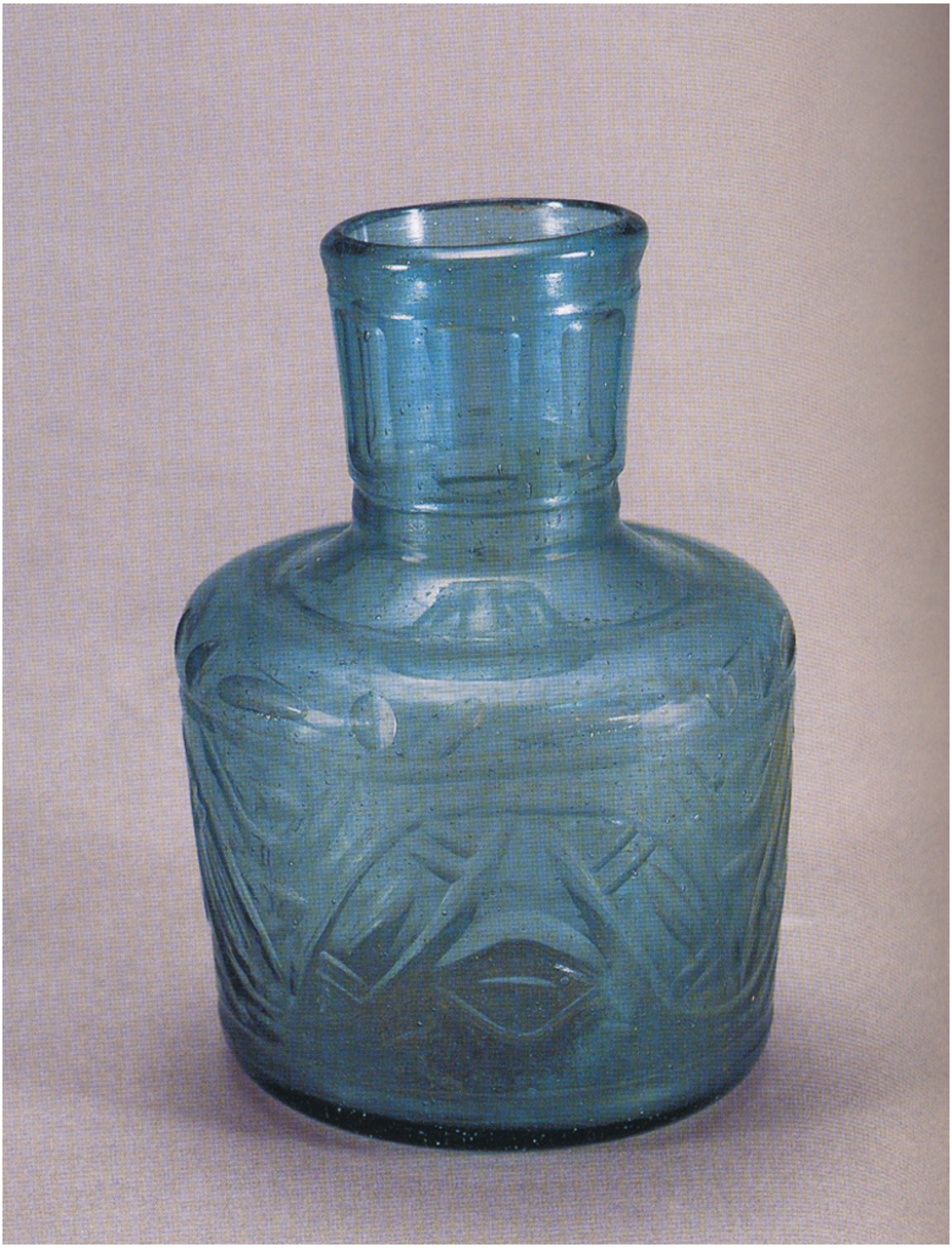

FIGURE 8.4 Bottle with a short tapering neck and wheel-cut decoration, Iran, *c.* tenth century. Glass, height 9.8 cm. From the relic deposit underneath the foundation of the Jingzhi Temple Pagoda in Dingzhou, Hebei province. Source: After Yang 2004: pl. 128.

the ninth and tenth centuries. The finds on shipwrecks help to augment contemporaneous archaeological evidence on land, and hence provide a useful corrective to previous scholarly emphases on a particular geographic region or a site. They reveal much of the nature of trade, religion, and court activity from the Middle East to India, and China to Southeast Asia in the ninth and tenth centuries. While discoveries of Chinese ceramics in the Middle East allowed us to consider the consumption and reception of those valuable commodities in the destined markets, archaeological evidence retrieved from shipwrecks and from the port city site of Yangzhou has enabled us to answer questions about the supply and circulation of trade ceramics. Excavated shipwrecks from the period confirm the continuous prosperity of the ceramics trade around the Indian Ocean, at a time of political turmoil inside China. Their cargo contents also reveal a gradual move to focus on suppliers from the southeast coast, coinciding with the increasing difficulty of long-distance communications across the country. They also provide material testimony to the dynamic maritime trade between China and the Abbasid caliphate as mediated by Southeast Asian countries.

Notes

1 Several texts of the Abbasid period (ninth to tenth centuries) recorded some of the experiences of the merchants and sailors who traveled from Basra and the Gulf to India and China. In addition to those mentioned in the main text, see also Ramhurmuzi 1883–1886 for a contemporary text, the *Kitab ʿajaʾib al-Hind* (The Book of the Wonders of India) with tales of the maritime trade with China. An anonymous text of the same period, *Akhbar Sin waʾl-Hind* (News of China and India), is equally interesting in this respect; see Sauvaget 1948.

2 Oliver Watson has demonstrated that the opaque white glaze was developed from yellow glaze, an indigenous invention of the Islamic potters, and it fitted in with a pre-existing market for fine glazed wares. See Watson, CHAPTER 19.

3 The pommel of a sword recovered from the eastern Mediterranean wreck, *Serçe Limanı* (eleventh century), is known to be of Indian manufacture, hence suggesting a similar Indian provenance for the two objects in consideration. See Bass *et al.* 2004: 382–387.

4 Recent finds of Abbasid luster in the port city of Sanjan on the west coast of India suggest an eastern export market. See Nanji 2011: 38–42, 87, 102–104, 212–223.

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Part III

Fragmentation and the Rival Caliphates of Cordoba, Cairo, and Baghdad (900–1050)

The temporary loss of Egypt to the Abbasid caliphate in the ninth century, when the rebellious governor Ahmad ibn Tulun established his own rule there, presaged the fragmentation of the caliphal territories in the following century. Along the eastern frontier, a series of ambitious local dynasts enjoyed *de facto* independence, while engaging in a complex *pas de deux* with the Abbasid caliphs, sending exotic gifts to Baghdad in return for various insignia that materialized the legitimacy of their rule.

After 909, the Abbasids faced a much more serious situation in the west, when the Fatimids, an Ismaiʿili Shiʿi dynasty that claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatima, seized power in Ifriqiyya (roughly present-day Tunisia), displacing the Aghlabids, Sunni vassals of the Abbasids. Fatimid ambitions were firmly focused on expansion eastwards. Throughout the tenth century, they made repeated attempts to conquer the revenue-rich province of Egypt, while also founding a series of capitals in Ifriqiyya, including Mahdiyya (921) and al-Mansuriyya, which is reported to have been circular, like the original Abbasid city of Baghdad. Just as significant was the Fatimids' assumption of the title of caliph (deputy [of God]), a title previously exclusive to the Abbasids of Baghdad, who had wrested it from their Umayyad predecessors.

Developments to the west further undermined the Abbasids' unilateral claim to universal sovereignty. In the eighth century, a survivor of the Umayyad dynasty had established at Cordoba in southern Spain (al-Andalus) a remnant Sunni Umayyad state, which did not accept the universal sovereignty of the Abbasids.

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By 929, the Umayyad ruler ʿAbd al-Rahman III (r. 912–961) also assumed the title of caliph, evidently responding to the rise of the Fatimids. This meant that there were now in effect three rival claimants to the title of caliph, the Sunni caliphs of Cordoba and Baghdad and the Shiʿi Fatimids of North Africa. All three availed of the traditional means of projecting authority in the Islamic world: *khutba* (the Friday sermon in which the community acknowledges its leader by name), *sikka* (coinage bearing the name of the ruler), and *tiraz* (textiles inscribed with the names and titles of the ruler). This phenomenon is analyzed within a comparative framework in the chapter of Glaire D. Anderson and Jennifer Pruitt, which emphasizes the reactive connectivity of the three caliphates. Similarly, the importance of textiles in articulating caliphal identities, particularly Fatimid identity, is the subject explored in Jochen Sokoly's chapter.

The Fatimid conquest of Egypt in 969 brought the threat to the Abbasids closer to home, while reconfiguring the cultural and political topography of the eastern Mediterranean. The foundation of Cairo, to the north of the older Egyptian capital of Fustat, initiated two centuries of dynamic cultural activity patronized by the Fatimid elites. These maintained close relations with Byzantium and the Norman rulers of Sicily, and sent missionaries as far east as the Arab polities of Sind, now in southern Pakistan, whose amirs converted to Ismaʿili Shiʿism during this period. In fact, the tenth century saw the political dominance of Shiʿi Islam in many regions of the Islamic world. In addition to the missionary activities of the Fatimids, in the 930s, an ethnically Persian Shiʿi dynasty known as the Buyids (or Buwayhids) took control of the southwestern Iranian province of Fars, followed by their conquest of Iraq after 945. Rather than overthrow the Abbasid caliph of Baghdad, the Buyid Shiʿis effectively maintained the nominal leader of the global Sunni community as a figurehead, albeit one whose political clout was severely limited. The period of Buyid rule over Iran and Iraq initiated a resurgent interest in pre-Islamic Persian culture that led to major innovations in art, architecture, and literature, phenomena sometimes collectively referred to as an "Iranian revival."

Paradoxically, the decline in the political power of the Abbasid caliphs did little to diminish the appeal of Abbasid cultural forms. Just as the Fatimids seem to have emulated the circular form of the fabled city of Baghdad in their North African capital of al-Mansuriyya, so, after assuming the title of caliph in 929, the Umayyads of Cordoba set about building a palatine city just outside of Cordoba, a suitable stage for the projection of their claims to universal rule. Despite the old enmity between the Abbasids and Umayyads, the scale and conception of this new Umayyad satellite capital, called Madinat al-Zahraʾ, owed much to Baghdad and Samarra. This is hardly surprising; despite the proliferation of distinctive regional visual markers of identity in the ninth and tenth centuries, we occasionally hear of cultural brokers who mediated the latest Abbasid styles for the Umayyad elite, bringing Iraqi music and even hairstyles west to Cordoba. The increased frequency of inscriptions, especially those with poetic texts, on portable objects of various sorts during this period is also a likely reflection of contemporary developments in Iraq. The most impressive Cordoban manifestation of this phenomenon lies in the delicately carved ivory vessels produced for the Umayyad elite, some of which bear inscriptions written in the first person (*prosopopoeia*), a development first documented in Abbasid Baghdad. Similarly, the art of luster ceramics first developed in Abbasid Iraq made an appearance in Fatimid Egypt by the end of the tenth century, after which date luster appears no longer to have been produced in Iraq. The temporal coincidence seems to imply the migration to Egypt of ceramicists in search of more stable patronage, a reminder of the way in which political developments can frustrate or enable artistic trends.

Our knowledge of Fatimid architecture is largely based on the survival of a series of congregational mosques in North Africa and Egypt. These generally lack a minaret and make use of a large projecting arched portal perhaps inspired by the triumphal arches of Roman North Africa. Nothing remains of the focal point of Fatimid Cairo, a great palace divided into an eastern and western wing set amidst gardens with lavish pavilions, astride the major ceremonial thoroughfare of the city. This palatial complex also containing dynastic tombs was destroyed in 1171 when the Fatimids fell, and little remains of its splendid metal and wooden carvings and paintings. The sack of the palace treasuries led to the dispersal of their celebrated array of exotica, relics, and riches, including a vast amount of carved rock crystal vessels, a type of artifact closely associated with the Fatimid elites. Recent research indicates that the source of the larger crystals used as raw material lay in Madagascar. The export of this and other African raw materials such as ivory and wood was facilitated by the development of trading emporia on the east coast of Africa, through which the Islamicization of local African populations was eventually effected. These developments are discussed in the chapter of Mark Horton in this section, which discusses the emergence of early Islam on the East African coast, a region generally omitted from survey books.

During the same period, trade with the west coast of India intensified, an intensification documented not only by finds of Indian textiles in the ports of the Red Sea but also by the letters of Jewish merchants who traded between Egypt, Aden, and western India, and whose correspondence offers remarkable insights into the scale and nature of a trade that was inter-confessional in its nature.

9

The Three Caliphates, a Comparative Approach

Glaire D. Anderson and Jennifer Pruitt

Introduction

By the end of the ninth century a shared international Islamic visual language, exhibiting local variations but recognizably engaged with models established by the Abbasid caliphal court, was established across the Islamic empire and evident in broad trends in urbanism, architecture, portable objects, and material culture (Hoffman 2008: 107–108; Saba 2012: 187–190). Comparable perhaps to the development and subsequent spread of the Romanesque and Gothic modes across Europe, the early caliphal period of the ninth and tenth centuries is marked by similarities in overall concepts and visual modes, which found expression in the imperial capitals of Baghdad and Samarra, and subsequently in Cordoba and Cairo. Monuments and artistic developments of the caliphal courts were, however, indebted to regional practices and materials as well as expressive of negotiations between factional dynastic and pan-Islamic trends.

The appearance of the Fatimid dynasty (r. 909–1171) in North Africa made explicit the political and religious fragmentation of the caliphal lands. At this time, the Fatimids challenged Abbasid religious and political hegemony, declaring their rival Shiʿi caliphate in 909. The emergence of this Fatimid claim to the caliphate was a catalyst in the Cordoban Umayyads' (r. 756–1031) subsequent assumption, after centuries as a semi-independent emirate, of caliphal authority in 929. Thus for the very specific period between 909 and 1031 (the year when the Cordoban caliphate was dissolved) the Islamic lands witnessed an unprecedented contest for caliphal authority, a contest in which art and architecture played a major role. Art historians have yet to step back from detailed analysis of specific case studies

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to consider the broader contours of this period and its art in light of caliphal competition. This is despite the acknowledgment that the period marks, on the one hand, the spread of artistic forms within the Abbasid Empire (in part as a means of asserting hegemonic power and authority) and on the other, heightened diplomatic and economic interactions between emerging dynasties and neighboring powers beyond the Dar al-Islam.

The complexity of the political landscape of the caliphal period was expressed in art and the built environment (Milwright 2010a: 666–678; 2010b: 76–83). Nevertheless, only the Cordoban Umayyad and Fatimid dynasties vied to establish what each saw as their rightful caliphal authority, unlike other regional polities that accepted Abbasid tutelage but did not lay claim to the title of caliph. So while the importance to the art of the caliphal period of dynasties such as the Buyids, Samanids, and Qarakhanids in the eastern parts of the Abbasid caliphate, and the Tulunids, Aghlabids, and their contemporaries in North Africa has to be acknowledged from the outset, it lies outside the scope of this chapter. Our aim here is to focus on and provide a synthetic overview of major architectural and urban developments of the Cordoban Umayyads and Fatimids, drawing attention to the means by which ceremonial practices and public texts served caliphal competition in the period between 909 and 1031. This chronology is bracketed by the establishment of the Fatimid caliphate in the early tenth century, and by the changing political landscape of the mid-eleventh century, by which time the dissolution of the Cordoban Umayyad caliphate was paralleled by a Fatimid transition into a state controlled by powerful viziers (Kennedy 2010: 390; Manzano Moreno 2010: 613–618; Bierman 1998: 100–132).

The art of the competing caliphates is rooted in eighth- and ninth-century models established by the Umayyads of Syria and the Abbasids in their imperial capitals of Baghdad and Samarra. Rather than attempting to fully delineate those earlier caliphal models, addressed elsewhere in the volume (see Northedge, CHAPTER 6 and Milwright, CHAPTER 7), this chapter sketches out the relevant ninth- and tenth-century developments.

Urban Foundations: Abbasid, Umayyad, and Fatimid

The Abbasid caliph al-Mansur founded the famous Round City of Baghdad in 762. Medieval texts describe this new royal capital in detail (Micheau 2008: 221–245; see Northedge, CHAPTER 6). It featured a palace and adjacent congregational mosque at its center, surrounded by a vast open space, while housing, streets, and markets that supported the military and administrative population were situated within a ring just inside the city walls. However, destruction in the wake of the Mongol conquests and the continued occupation of the city over subsequent centuries has led to the disappearance of early Abbasid Baghdad (see Tabbaa, CHAPTER 12). The earliest surviving remains date to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, after the period on which this chapter focuses. Our knowledge of Abbasid architecture during the caliphal period is therefore derived from the excavated remains at Samarra, the Abbasid capital between roughly 836 and 892, and elsewhere in the Abbasid territories, especially in Iraq and Syria (Leisten 2003: Northedge 2005).

In 936–937, roughly a century after the construction of Abbasid Samarra began in the east, and some eight years after staking claim to the title of caliph, ʿAbd al-Rahman III began the construction of the new royal city of Madinat al-Zahraʾ near Cordoba in the Islamic West (Vallejo Triano 2010; 2006: 9–26). He followed a well-established pattern of founding new royal cities near established urban centers, exemplified by Baghdad, Samarra, and the North African cities founded by Abbasid vassals in the ninth century and by the Fatimids in the early tenth century. Indeed, the name of ʿAbd al-Rahman's new city may in itself have alluded to Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, and its foundation can be seen as a challenge and response to the Fatimids, who claimed descent from Fatima (Fierro 2004: 316–321).

Located some 8 km west of Cordoba's old city walls, Madinat al-Zahraʾ consists of three broad terraces ascending the lower slopes of the Sierra Morena mountain range. In plan the city forms a rectangle of approximately 1500 × 745 m, with fortified double walls enclosing an area of 9 hectares. It was arranged hierarchically, with the lowest level used for markets, housing for soldiers, and other functions associated with city life. The administrative, residential, and official buildings of the Umayyads and their court were situated upon the two upper terraces, separated from the lower level by walls and gates, and oriented toward the south. The city was thus designed to take maximum advantage of a site that afforded dramatic vistas of the fertile plain that stretches from the mountain range south to the Guadalquivir River.

The majority of the structures found within the new palace city of Madinat al-Zahraʾ remain unexcavated. However, since the 1920s a number of structures identified as administrative and palatial buildings, along with residences and service areas, all of which are centrally located on the upper two terraces, have been excavated and reconstructed. The most celebrated of the structures is the so-called Salon Rico (Rich Hall), or the Hall of ʿAbd al-Rahman III (Figure 9.1). The building is believed to be the reception hall mentioned in Arabic texts as the site of many Umayyad court ceremonies. The signal elements from the Umayyad Great Mosque of Cordoba – horseshoe arches with red and white alternating voussoirs – appear in this palatial space. Throughout the city, interiors of court buildings were covered in stone panels carved with intricate vegetal motifs whose execution combines the vegetal forms of Syrian Umayyad ornament with the abstraction characteristic of much of the architectural ornament of Abbasid Samarra. Yet they differ significantly in their style and in the absence of the distinctive beveled mode of ornament developed in Abbasid Iraq (see Milwright, Chapter 7, this volume); instead, they are closer to the Romano-Byzantine Mediterranean spirit of earlier Umayyad vegetal decoration.

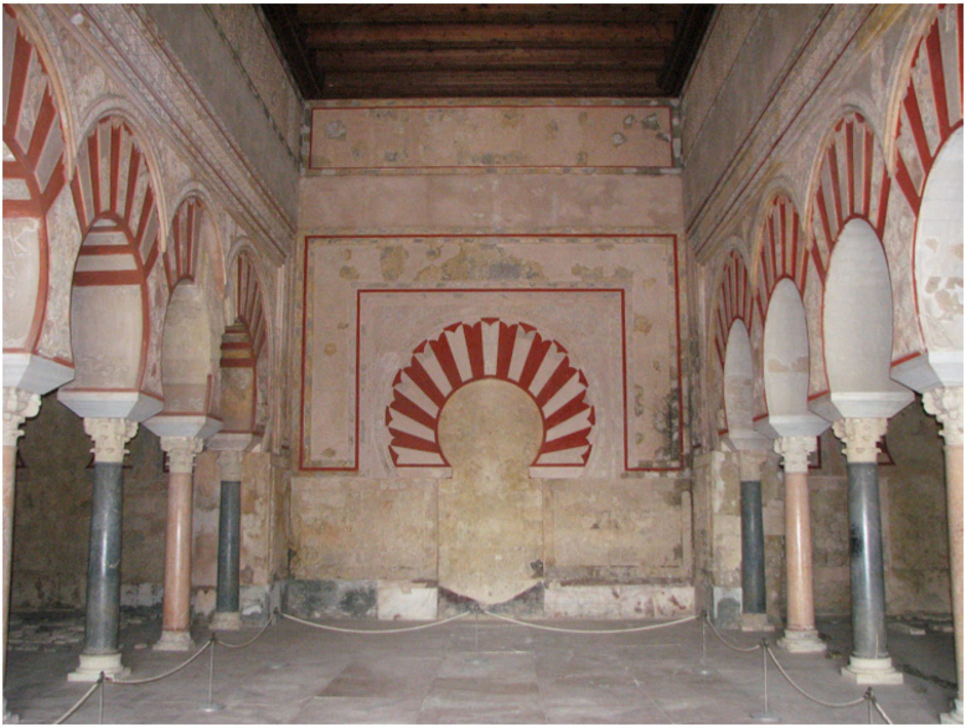

FIGURE 9.1 Reception Hall of ʻAbd al-Rahman III, Madinat al-Zahra', Cordoba. Source: Glaire D. Anderson. Reproduced with permission.

This Mediterranean dimension is also relevant to urban foundations of the Fatimids of North Africa. Unlike the Sunni Abbasids and Cordoban Umayyads, the Fatimids were Ismaʻili Shiʻis, tracing their lineage to the Prophet Muhammad via his cousin and son-in-law ʻAli. Hence, in addition to his political leadership, the Fatimid ruler (imam) held a special, semi-divine status. Although the initial origins of the Fatimids are difficult to unravel, their first major urban centers were in Tunisia, where, in 921, they founded a new capital city, al-Mahdiyya, named after the caliph ʻUbayd Allah al-Mahdi (r. 909–934). The new capital was situated on a narrow, tightly controlled peninsula in eastern Tunisia and must have been particularly threatening to the nearby Cordoban Umayyads (Bloom 2007: 22–23; Halm 1996: 235–240). Al-Mahdiyya was highly fortified, with a long, stone wall along the sea, and a deep gate known as "the dark vestibule" (*al-saqifa al-kahla*) cutting off the peninsula from the mainland. Within this heavily fortified enclave, the caliph and his court resided, while the remainder of the population lived in a satellite city outside the city walls, known as Zawila. At the center of the new royal city was a mosque and palace separated as distinct entities. Little is known of the palaces of al-Mahdiyya, though remains of mosaic floor pavements with geometric designs in stone tesserae suggest the luxury with which it was decorated

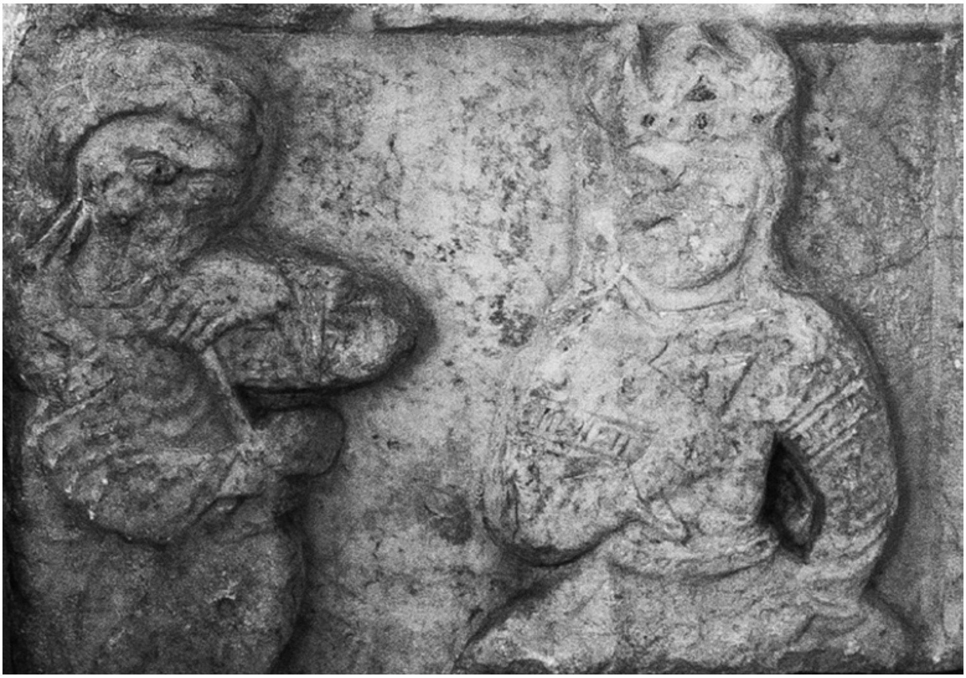

FIGURE 9.2 Cup bearer and musician, from al-Mahdiyya, in the Bardo National Museum, Tunis. Source: Jennifer Pruitt. Reproduced with permission.

(Bloom 2007: 31). A stone relief from al-Mahdiyya depicts a seated figure holding a cup and wearing a crown and *tiraz*, flanked by a musician (Figure 9.2), evoking the courtly culture of the Fatimids.

As caliphal competition between the Cordoban Umayyads and North African Fatimids increased, al-Mahdiyya was quickly abandoned as a capital city, and a new one was formed further inland nearer to Qayrawan, the former capital of the Aghlabids (who had been Abbasid vassals). Named after the Fatimid caliph, al-Mansur (r. 946–953), al-Mansuriyya (city of Mansur, the Victorious) was constructed on a round city plan like the Abbasid al-Mansur's Baghdad. By adopting the round city plan, the Fatimids expressed both their caliphal power and their eastern ambitions. While the rulers may not have had direct experience of the Abbasid capital, the round plan with a mosque and palace at the center, in addition to some of the names of the palaces at al-Mansuriyya, including Khawarnaq (a celebrated pre-Islamic palace in Iraq), suggest a knowledge and emulation of eastern building models (al-Muqaddasi 1994: 187). Its location near Qayrawan, unlike al-Mahdiyya that had been purposefully located far from it, suggests that the Fatimid rulers no longer considered the Sunni stronghold as a major threat. The use of urban planning as a form of caliphal rivalry was made visually manifest in the competition between Madinat al-Zahraʾ and the foundation of al-Mansuriyya. While Madinat al-Zahraʾs terraces, with its halls, gardens, and larger landscape views can be seen as a response to Abbasid Samarra, Fatimid al-Mansuriyya alluded to Baghdad, founded earlier by the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur (Ruggles 2000: 92).

In 1947, aerial investigations of the site of al-Mansuriyya revealed a circular city plan, with a diameter of approximately 750 m. Impressions of many of the pools remain, but little else can be found indicating the original city. What seems evident is that, like the palace-cities in Madinat al-Zahraʾ and Samarra, the royal residences of al-Mansuriyya were not a single palatial entity but a series of buildings, constructed over a period of time. Like Madinat al-Zahraʾ, this was a separate palace-city, with royal residences, a mosque, as well as the caliphal workshops and mint, a model that would later be implemented in the foundation of Cairo. Numerous fragments of carved and painted stucco decoration, characterized by mainly vegetal motifs but including figural imagery as well, have been recovered from the site (Barrucand and Rammah 2009: 350–352). Court poetry points to the splendor of al-Mansuriyya, in contrast to the defensive priorities of al-Mahdiyya, and suggests a growing concern with luxury that would later be realized as the Fatimids expanded into Egypt. The lavishness of the al-Mansuriyya court is likewise suggested by accounts of a visit by an embassy of the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII in 952–953, indicating Byzantine appreciation of the growing importance of Fatimid power. The Byzantine ruler was said to have been overwhelmed with the majesty of the Fatimid court "finding it unequalled even in his own land" (Bloom 2007: 41).

From their base in al-Mansuriyya, the Fatimids made several attempts to conquer Egypt. This ambition was finally realized in 969, under the guidance of the general Jawhar, who conquered an ancient land that had been destabilized by famine and poor administration on the part of the Ikhshidids (Bianquis 2008: 109–119). It was following their conquest of Egypt and establishment of the new royal city of Cairo (al-Qahira, meaning the Victorious) that the Fatimids reached the height of their power. While the roots of the Fatimid interest in luxury and palace-cities may have been found in North Africa, in competition with the Cordoban Umayyads, it would develop further with the establishment of Cairo as a caliphal capital.

Although the Fatimid caliph al-Muʿizz would remain in al-Mansuriyya until 973, construction of Cairo's walls, mosque, and palace began in advance of his arrival there, under the guidance of the general Jawhar. After conquering and marching through the pre-existing city centers of al-ʿAskar, Fustat, and al-qataʾiʿ, Jawhar and his armies camped in an area to the north of these centers. The Fatimid forces walled this new enclave, naming it, initially, al-Mansuriyya, after the Tunisian capital, which continued to house the caliph. The Mamluk historian Ibn Duqmaq (d. 1406) recorded that this walled section was to ensure that the Fatimid entourage was kept separate from the public (Creswell 1952: 21). The establishment of a separate city for imperial troops, constructed to the north of pre-existing urban centers, followed the pattern of previous rulers of Egypt. However, unlike the previous centers, the new Fatimid city was walled, following the prototypes of al-Mansuriyya and al-Mahdiyya.

With the conquest of Egypt and the foundation of the palace city of Cairo, the Fatimid caliphs entered an era in which patronage was focused on this new imperial capital. Following the establishment of the walled city, a *musalla* (open prayer space) was constructed to the north, where the *ʿid* (religious festival) prayers would be performed. The creation of this differentiated prayer space marked a meaningful religious distinction between the new Shiʿi rulers and the Sunni majority population. Not only did the Ismaʿili court celebrate the *ʿid* prayers in a separate space from the population but they did so on Shiʿi rather than Sunni calculations for timing (Sanders 1994: 45). In this way, sectarian difference was expressed both spatially and temporally. This differentiation was made more pronounced the following year, when Jawhar added the Ismaʿili formula "Come to the best of works" (*hayya ʿala khayr al-ʿamal*) to the call to prayer, both in the new royal city and the urban centers to the south (Bierman 1998a: 73; Sanders 1994: 45).

The Fatimid palace was the heart of the new walled city of Cairo. It was the second monumental architectural project in the royal city, following construction of the al-Azhar Mosque, and was located to its north. The transference of the entire, well-organized Fatimid polity from Tunisia to Egypt marked a major administrative feat, and indicated the importance attached to this move eastward, perhaps to be closer to the coveted Abbasid heartland (Brett 2000: 318–325). In addition to moving the entire court, the imam-caliph brought the bodies of his ancestors with him to the new capital city, an act that emphasized the importance of lineage to the legitimacy of the Shiʿi Fatimids. After al-Muʿizz came to Egypt in 973, the arrival of the imam-caliph shifted the role of the city significantly. As Ismaʿilis believed him to be the center of divine light, the storehouse of esoteric knowledge, and the navel of the Ismaʿili world (Bierman 1998a: 60–63; Sanders 1994: 40–41), the site of his presence carried particular significance for the community, which was not common to the Baghdad- and Cordoba-based rivals of the Fatimids.

Unfortunately, the Fatimid palaces no longer remain, and need to be reconstructed through textual records. The area of the Fatimid palace was markedly smaller than those of the Abbasids or Cordoban Umayyads. Based on a description preserved by the Mamluk historian al-Maqrizi (d. 1442), it has been suggested that the palace would have measured 425 × 275 m. It was organized as a series of iwans and pavilions, and divided into two main sections: the Eastern Palace or "Great Palace" (*al-qasr al-kabir*), and the Western Palace or "Lesser Palace" (*qasr al-saghir al-gharbi*), built between 978 and 980 by al-Muʿizz's son, al-ʿAziz. During this time, al-ʿAziz sponsored the construction of the Golden Palace (*qasr al-dhahab*), the Great Iwan (*al-iwan al-kabir*), which al-Musabbihi (d. 1029) declared was incomparable to anything else in the universe (Sayyid 1999: 214). While the Eastern Palace had a generally more official, administrative function, the Western Palace consisted of pavilions amidst gardens housing the Fatimid descendants, as well as the bodies of their ancestors, brought to the city by al-Muʿizz (Ravaisse 1889: 409–479; Sayyid 1999: 117–126).

Between the Eastern and Western Palaces was a rectangular ceremonial ground, designated "between the two palaces" (*bayn al-qasrayn*). This thoroughfare would come to be a major ceremonial site for the Fatimids, and retain its significance in subsequent eras. Even today, while the palaces no longer remain, the thoroughfare is preserved. The palace complex was perhaps the most famous of Fatimid architectural projects, celebrated for its luxurious furnishings and elaborate ceremonial protocol (Canard 1951; Sanders 1994: 39–82). While it is difficult to reconstruct the form and aesthetics of the palatial structures, it is important to recognize that their function would have been significantly different from that of the Cordoban Umayyad or Abbasid palaces, which is due to the role of the Ismaʿili imam-caliph. As the dwelling place of the Fatimid imam, the palace complex was not only a center for pomp, luxury, and caliphal power. It was also the center of knowledge for the Ismaʿili *daʿwa* (mission) and the center of the Ismaʿili universe as the shelter of the Fatimid ancestors' bodies, and most importantly of the living imam (Bierman 1998a: 60–62; Sanders 1994: 39–82; Walker 1998: 141–145).[1] Indeed, while the Fatimid palaces are most famous for their luxury, complex ceremonies, and vast libraries and treasuries, in the time of the early caliphs, they were also the locus of the "sessions of wisdom" (*majalis al-ḥikma*), through which the Ismaʿili doctrine and esoteric interpretation of the Sunna were spread to the Ismaʿili initiates who had sworn a special oath (Halm 1996). The centrality of these sessions to palace life is suggested by an event in 995, in which 11 people were crushed to death because of the crowds gathering to hear the Ismaʿili teachings (Halm 1997b: 43).

The burial of Fatimid caliphs within the palace complex partly echoed Abbasid practices as some of the Abbasid caliphs are known to have been buried in the grounds of the Samarra palaces, several of them within former garden pavilions (Allen 1983: 421). Similarly, the Cordoban Umayyads were buried in a funerary garden (*rawda*) within the urban palace complex in Cordoba (Ruggles 2000: 130–132). The use of palace grounds for burial was continued in later Spanish dynastic palaces like the Nasrid Alhambra and in North Africa (e.g., the Saadian tombs; see O'Kane, CHAPTER 23 and Robinson CHAPTER 28, and Ruggles 2008: 105–106). The age of the rival caliphates, then, was dominated by palaces and large congregational mosques rather than by smaller scale shrines and mosques, as seen in Fatimid Cairo after the weakening of the caliphate and the arrival of the vizier Badr al-Jamali, in 1072. The caliphates also did not sponsor the multifunction funerary socioreligious complexes, which would proliferate in the post-Seljuq and Ayyubid era.

Religious Foundations

All three caliphates founded large congregational mosques in their capital cities that introduced variations on the hypostyle plan and modes of architectural decoration established during the preceding Umayyad period. The Abbasid mosques, as known from Samarra, diverge most from the Mediterranean forms and materials of the earlier period. Their mosques were built of baked brick decorated with carved stucco and featured elongated axial plans whose long axis was underscored by a freestanding spiral minaret situated opposite the prayer hall. The Cordoban and Fatimid mosques display a closer relationship to the Mediterranean visual character of the Umayyad monuments, but in fact they synthesize elements of both the earlier Umayyad and the Abbasid models while introducing innovations that created a distinct visual character for each rival caliphate.

In Cordoba, ʿAbd al-Rahman III focused the majority of his building efforts on the new palace city, but he also undertook work at the Great Mosque of the city near the end of his reign (Nieto Cumplido 1998: 157–178; Calvo Capilla 2014: 63–109). In 951–952 he had the mosque's minaret dismantled to make way for a new tower (today encased within a much later outer shell), which was followed in 958 by the restoration of the courtyard façade of the prayer hall. The placement of the minaret at one end of a longitudinal axis terminating in the qibla wall shows the Cordoban adaptation of a feature of Abbasid congregational mosques in Samarra and North Africa. The international Abbasid plan was synthesized with elements, such as a wider central nave and interior double arcades with bicolored voussoirs, that nevertheless looked to Syrian Umayyad models, notably the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus.

The expansion of the Cordoba mosque under al-Hakam II (r. 961–976), who succeeded his father ʿAbd al-Rahman III to the Cordoban caliphate, further illustrates how the Cordoban Umayyads looked to their Syrian Umayyad ancestral past to strengthen their claim to the caliphate during the period of competition (Dodds 1990; Calvo Capilla 2014: 85–96). Al-Hakam II expanded the prayer hall, elongating the longitudinal plan created by his father's addition. The culmination of the prayer hall is a spectacular *maqsura* (royal enclosure) and mihrab completed in 965 (Figure 9.3). Here, architectural elements – colored marble columns and intricate screens of interlacing, lobed arches – visually demarcate the rectangular space of the *maqsura*, which terminates in three domed bays fronting a mihrab that are given the unprecedented form of a discrete chamber with a classicizing shell-shaped vault (Khoury 1996: 90–91; Nieto Cumplido 1998: 228–230). The dome and the mihrab are ornamented with vegetal motifs and Qurʾanic verses in Kufic epigraphy, worked in carved marble and splendid glass mosaic of blue, green, and red on gold ground. Scholars have rightly emphasized how the mosaics strongly evoke the decoration of previous Syrian Umayyad monuments, such as the Dome of the Rock accompanied by the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Great Mosque of Damascus, understanding them as a statement of Umayyad political and religious authority against that of the Abbasids (Dodds 1990: 94–109; Flood 2001: 193–194; Khoury 1996: 86–94; Calvo Capilla 2014: 97–105).

In their form and decoration, the congregational mosques erected by the Fatimids both in North Africa and Cairo are distinct from those of the Umayyads of Cordoba. The mosque at al-Mahdiyya has been highly restored and it is difficult to reconstruct its appearance in the tenth century. However, it seems to have relied heavily on the local vocabulary of Tunisia, inherited from the Roman tradition.

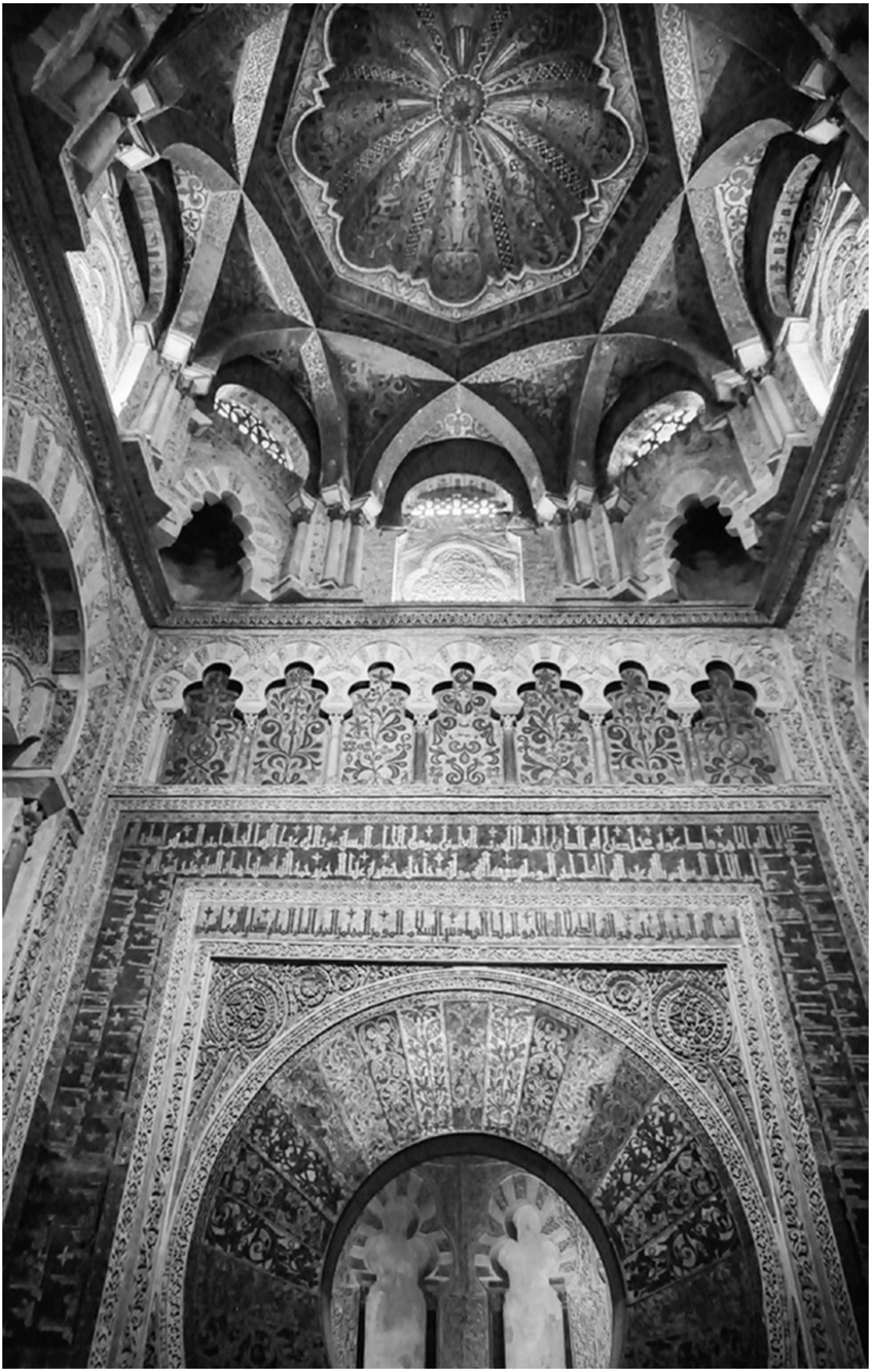

Figure 9.3 Great Mosque of Cordoba, Spain, mihrab. Source: Jennifer Pruitt. Reproduced with permission.

Like many caliphal counterparts, the mosque had a rectangular, pier-based, T-shaped hypostyle plan. The wide prayer hall consisted of nine aisles perpendicular to the qibla wall. The central nave was distinguished through greater width, clustered columns, and a higher elevation, with clerestory windows illuminating this area of the prayer hall. A wide aisle ran parallel to the qibla wall, with this intersection marked by a dome, similar to Aghlabid mosques (Bloom 2007: 23–29).

However, the mosque departed from Abbasid caliphal traditions in its inclusion of a projecting, three-arched portal with a wide central arched entrance on the axis of the mihrab, in place of a monumental minaret. The portal consists of a horseshoe arch, flanked by smaller niches on two stories, clearly evoking Roman triumphal arches, examples of which still stand in North Africa (Bloom 2007: 26; Lézine 1967: 82–101). In addition, the entrance façade featured two towers on either corner. It seems that these towers were not meant to serve as minarets but had the functional purpose of cisterns (Halm 1997a: 220–221). This monumental façade was oriented toward a plaza and the main thoroughfare of the city.

Many of the features that appear in the congregational mosques built by the Fatimids in North Africa before the conquest of Egypt recur later in the mosques of Fatimid Cairo. Al-Azhar (The Radiant) Mosque was the first Fatimid monumental mosque in Cairo, established in 970. The original form and function of the mosque is difficult to determine, as it has been a major focus of later refurbishments and reconstructions. According to Creswell's reconstruction, the mosque was originally a hypostyle construction, made of brick and plaster, measuring approximately 85 × 70 m (Creswell 1952: 43). Initially, it most likely included a projecting portal, following in the model of its North African prototypes, as seen in al-Mahdiyya (Bloom 2007: 60). However, it likely did not include a minaret, unlike Abbasid, Umayyad, and previous Egyptian mosques. This most likely reflects sectarian divisions, as Shiʿi practice dictated that the call to prayer would come from either the portal or the roof itself (Bloom 2007: 62; Rabbat 1996: 50).

The mosque was made up of a series of three colonnades, surrounding a central courtyard, a plan similar to those found in all three caliphal contexts. The main sanctuary was supported by pairs of spoliated columns, taken from nearby ancient and Coptic monuments, placed on bases to correct for differences in height (Figure 9.4). The use of *spolia* as architectural supports, despite the difficulty in adjusting for height and resultant structural problems, suggests a meaningful appropriation of these earlier features. A central, perpendicular transept, which stood higher and wider than the rest of the structure, marked the direction of qibla, recalling the structure of the mosque at al-Mahdiyya. The decoration of the original mosque has likewise been heavily restored, making it difficult to determine the original decorative program. However, it seems to have consisted of carved plaster with vegetal scrolls and Qurʾanic inscriptions (Bloom 2007: 62–63; Creswell 1952: 51–58). In the early years of the Fatimid caliphate, this relatively small mosque was utilized primarily by the Ismaʿili court, although Ismaʿili events would attract members from outside the royal city as well (Bierman 1998a: 73–74).

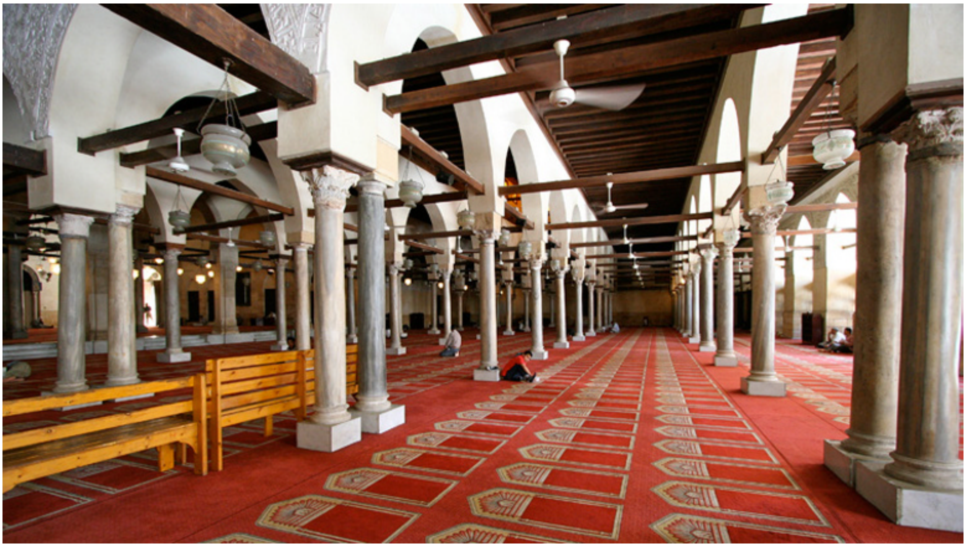

Figure 9.4 Mosque of al-Azhar, Cairo. Source: Jennifer Pruitt. Reproduced with permission.

The next mosque project for the Fatimids was begun under the imam-caliph al-ʿAziz, in 990, when ground was broken to the north of the city walls, near the open-air *musalla* (Sanders 1994: 48–52; Sayyid 1998: 332). Although the mosque was begun by al-ʿAziz, it was completed by his son, al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. The precise dating of much of the mosque is unclear. However, we know that al-Hakim ordered that the monumental portal and two towers be added to its northern and western corners; the mosque, which was known at the time as al-Anwar (The Illuminated) is now renowned as the Mosque of al-Hakim. At 120 × 113 m it was over twice the size of al-Azhar, and consisted of a large rectangular courtyard, surrounded by pier-supported arcades with pointed arches and a five-aisle pier-supported prayer hall. Following in the tradition of North African prototypes, the mosque features a transept perpendicular to the mihrab and three domes on the qibla wall. The mosque's shape is slightly irregular, suggesting hasty initial construction (Creswell 1952: 67).

Unlike the lively vegetal forms carved into the stucco revetments of al-Azhar, the decoration of the Mosque of al-Hakim was more stark, with a series of Qurʾanic verses in a floriated Kufic script, carved stone on the exterior, and decorative wooden tie beams carved in the Abbasid-influenced beveled style. The mosque contained 13 entrances, with the main entrance across from the mihrab. Lamps, mats, and other soft furnishings would have originally contributed to the decorative scheme (Bloom 1987: 17).

While the sanctuary of the mosque was constructed in stucco-covered brick and roughly hewn stone, the towers and portal were finely carved and added a

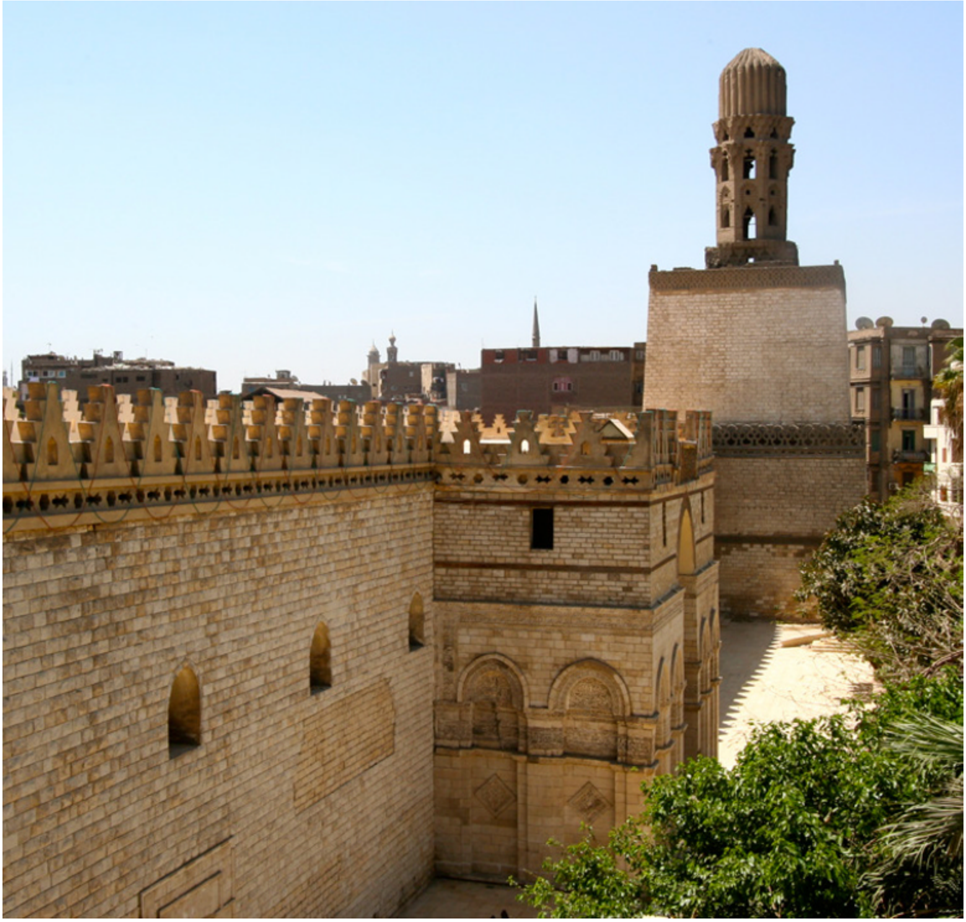

FIGURE 9.5 Mosque of al-Hakim, Cairo, south minaret with encasing, inscription, and reconstructed portal. Source: Jennifer Pruitt. Reproduced with permission.

monumentality to the building's façade (Figure 9.5). The basic form of the portal and two towers followed the precedent established in North Africa, as seen at al-Mahdiyya. However, the addition of a monumental public text with specific Ismaʿili resonances (see "public text" section below) was unusual, as was the fact that the original, intricate-carved towers were covered only seven years later, encased in the austere brick bastions visible today.

Comparative Analysis of Architecture under the Rival Caliphates

The preceding sections have highlighted the broad similarities between the Abbasids, Cordoban Umayyads, and Fatimids, evident in the development both of established capitals and of new royal cities along with their requisite monuments, notably congregational mosques and palace complexes. The articulation of each dynasty's specific identity *vis-à-vis* the others is evident in distinctions and the subtle manipulation of shared social and artistic conventions evident in architectural ornament, court ceremony, and public text.

Significant differences are apparent in the ornamentation of the monuments built by all three caliphates. At least in the eighth and ninth centuries, the Abbasids, like their Syrian Umayyad predecessors, decorated their monuments with carved stucco, glass, and mother-of-pearl mosaics, and wall-paintings which synthesized the preceding great princely traditions of the Hellenistic and Sasanian empires into a new international visual language associated with Islamic rule (Carboni 2001; Hoffman 2008; Leisten 2003). This visual language was characterized by an emphasis on princely luxury and what has been called an aesthetic of wonder (*ʿajab*) (Hoffman 2008: 123–124; Saba 2012: 203–207). Exemplified by the architecture of Samarra, an Abbasid aesthetic of ornament emerged that was characterized by symmetrical, abstracted, and undulating abstract vegetal forms (see Milwright, CHAPTER 7). Its distinctive beveling can be seen in panels of molded and carved stucco, as well as in wood, carved marble, and other media (Figure 9.6). Painting fragments from Samarra indicate a flattened, abstracted treatment of the human figure suggestive of eastern visual modes. Although scholars have traditionally emphasized the stylized quality of Abbasid painting and attributed this to a preference for eastern (especially Sasanian) models, there may have been more continuity with Umayyad aesthetic precedents than is usually suggested (Hoffman 2008: 124–127).

At least in terms of materials, there is a notable overlap between the ornament of Abbasid monuments in Iraq and those of Umayyad Cordoba. The architectural ornament favored in Cordoban Umayyad monuments can be summed up by the use of bi-colored horseshoe arches, the covering of surfaces with panels of limestone, marble and stucco carved into luxuriant fields of vegetation, and most spectacularly, the use of glass mosaics in a rich palette of gold, blue, green, and red. The sum total is a complex synthesis of Syrian Umayyad, Byzantine, and Visigothic materials, techniques, and motifs, which is nevertheless also informed to some degree by the abstraction of the carved stuccos of Abbasid Samarra, even if the beveled style as such is absent. Unlike Iraq where marble had to be imported and gold mosaics were scarce, Cordoban architecture of the caliphal period featured both, resulting in a distinctively Mediterranean visual language (Necipoğlu 1995: 93–95). On the whole this decorative program created a powerful visual message that scholars believe was meant to underscore the legitimacy of the Cordoban Umayyad claim to the caliphate (Dodds 1990: 94–109; Khoury 1996: 87–94).

By contrast with both Abbasid Iraq and Umayyad Andalusia, the hallmark Fatimid ornamental style consisted of delicate and elaborate vegetal scrolls, interspersed with human or animal figures in lively, animated poses. Associated most closely with the Fatimid palace beams (Figure 9.7), preserved and reused in the thirteenth-century Maristan of the Mamluk sultan Qalaʾun, this combination of vegetal scroll and figures is found on smaller scale Fatimid objects, including ivory

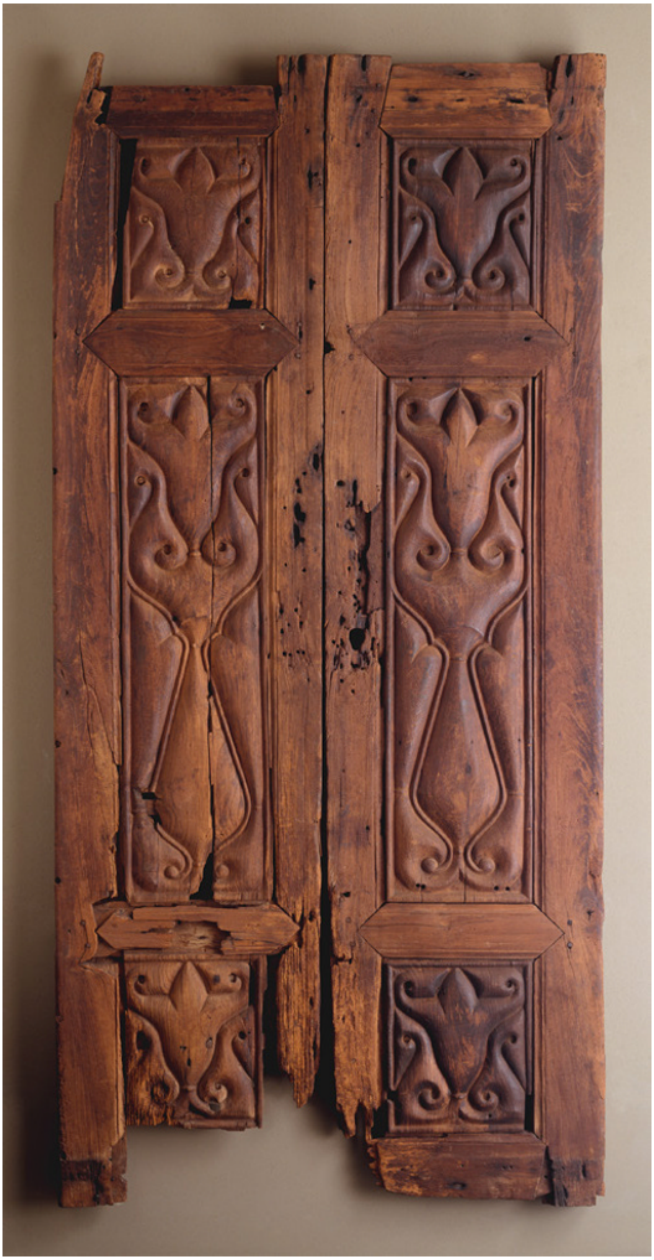

Figure 9.6 Carved wood doors, ninth-century Iraq. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

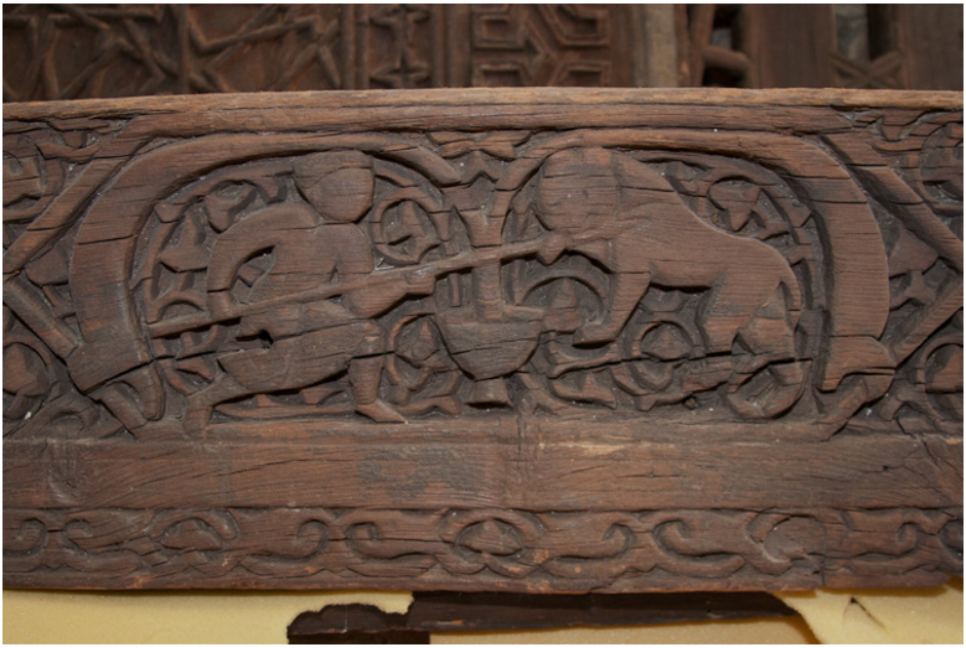

Figure 9.7 Detail of Fatimid palace beams, from the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo. Source: Jennifer Pruitt. Reproduced with permission.

fragments and luster ceramics (Hoffman 1999). With pairs of figures engaged in hunting, music, and courtly life, alternating with various animals, this characteristic Fatimid aesthetic has led scholars to note a Fatimid penchant for figural decoration (Ettinghausen 1942; Grabar 1972).

While the palace beams preserve a figural style, Fatimid religious architecture remained aniconic. Al-Azhar's interior aesthetic recalled the classical past, with its reliance on spoliated columns, situated in pairs. The interior of the mosque has been highly restored and the stucco ornament represents several phases of building, most notably the renovations of al-Hafiz (r. 1129–1149), which postdates the scope of this chapter.[2] The conch of the mihrab at al-Azhar appears to be original and features repeated undulating vegetal scrolls, which are partially abstracted, and partially identifiable as Byzantine-style palmettes. This niche is quite similar to pre-Fatimid mihrabs at the mosque of Ibn Tulun (Behrens-Abouseif 1989: 60) suggesting a continuation of local Egyptian practices. Early Fatimid architectural ornament also continued in the traditions of the Abbasids, which may have been similarly mediated through the Tulunids. A door from the mosque of al-Hakim from 1010, as well as wooden tie beams from the same mosque, combine Abbasid beveled-style carving, with a more delicate execution. Perhaps the most consistent and distinctive ornamental element of Fatimid religious architecture in the early period is the widespread use of floriated Kufic inscriptions, which is in evidence at both the al-Azhar and al-Hakim mosques. This distinctive style continued and was elaborated throughout the Fatimid period.

Inscriptions were a key feature of monumental architecture from the inception of the Islamic architectural tradition (Sourdel-Thomine, J. et al. (1960–2007)). In addition to architecture, the use of Arabic text on coins and textiles marked the official pronouncements of each caliphate and engaged in competitive rhetoric. The use of Kufic inscriptions was characteristic of the caliphal period, appearing on exterior surfaces, such as portals and courtyard walls, within the prayer halls on walls and ceilings, and carved into capitals and mihrabs. The content of these inscriptions was usually Qurʾanic, and also conveyed information about patronage and other facets of medieval architectural production, such as the identity of masons, sculptors, and other artisans. In the tenth century such public texts became another arena in which the contest between the competing caliphates seems to have been waged. Inscriptions from Fatimid and Cordoban Umayyad congregational mosques attest to the manipulation of both the form and the content of monumental inscriptions in the service of each of these caliphal newcomers' political and religious identities and claims to legitimacy *vis-à-vis* the Abbasids. The inscriptions of the caliphates relied on the careful choice and combinations of specific Qurʾanic quotations to convey distinct messages, often characterized by sectarian distinctions and, at times, declaring or emphasizing each caliphate's claim to legitimacy.

Inscriptions from the Abbasid monuments of Samarra or Baghdad may not have survived, but epigraphy on Abbasid *tiraz* (official textiles produced in caliphal state workshops) and objects such as marble tombstones suggests that earlier Syrian Umayyad conventions, such as the use of Kufic calligraphy, as well as the kind of information and content conveyed, continued to be utilized by the three competing caliphal dynasties. Abbasid *tiraz* formulae usually consist, for instance, of the *basmala*, the phrase "blessing from God to the servant of God" (*baraka min Allah li-ʿAbd Allah*) followed by the name of the caliph and his title, the expression of a wish for his long reign, the name of the individual who ordered the fabric, the name of the workshop where it was made, and the date (see Sokoly, Chapter 11, this volume; *Encyclopedia of Islam, s.v. "tiraz"* and Stillmann *et al.* 1960–2007).

An intensification of the competition between the two caliphal dynasties is evident in the tenth-century inscription programs of the Great Mosque of Cordoba and the Mosque of al-Hakim in Cairo. Under al-Hakam II, Umayyad inscriptions in al-Andalus ceased to use the elaborated Kufic style commonly used throughout the empire in the ninth century. Cordoban Umayyad inscriptions from the second half of the tenth century, when al-Hakam II reigned as the second Andalusi caliph, were instead articulated in a spare, simple Kufic style that offers a marked contrast to the elaborate foliated Kufic of both Abbasid and Fatimid public texts (Lévi-Provençal 1931).

A message of caliphal competition is evident in inscriptions added to the Great Mosque of Cordoba during the reign of the third caliph Hisham (r. 976–1008 and 1010–1012), by the Umayyad regent Ibn Abi Amir, better known as al-Mansur (Calvo Capilla 2000: 18–26; 2010: 178–181; Rosser-Owen 2002: 121–137). These inscriptions reject Fatimid and Abbasid claims to religious and political authority, highlighting the Umayyad West as defender of orthodox Sunni Islam. Related developments in North Africa during the same period also attest to the ongoing ideological competition between the Amirid regency in Cordoba, and the Fatimids and their North African allies, despite the removal of the Fatimids to Egypt. It is thus against this earlier ideological struggle played out between al-Andalus and North Africa that epigraphy as a signal feature of the later Fatimid architecture and urbanism in Egypt can be understood.

In the case of Fatimid Cairo, the prevalence of large-scale, exterior inscriptions, or "public texts," executed in the dynasty's hallmark floriated Kufic style, characterized many of the monuments of the early caliphal period in Cairo. This is very much evident in the inscriptions of the Mosque of al-Hakim, constructed in Cairo in 990, with the inscriptions added in 1002–1003. The reign of al-Hakim ushered in a period of monumental public texts, which would continue to define Fatimid architecture and develop into a characteristic Cairene architectural trait in the centuries to come (Bierman 1998a: 75–95).With al-Hakim's addition of two towers and a portal to his mosque in 1002–1003, large-scale text and symbolic imagery played an unprecedented role in the decorative program of the façade. As in the case of other caliphal public texts, the towers included many verses from the Qurʾan, in this case, executed in large-scale floriated Kufic script, which could be read easily by pedestrians. Although the verses chosen would be universally acceptable to all Muslims, they would have particular resonances to the Ismaʿili faithful. In particular, Irene Bierman has interpreted the significance of the concentric circle motif on the façade, as a "sign of Ismaʿilism," meant to evoke the Ismaʿili allegorical system, in which the inner (*batin*) truths of the exoteric (*zahir*) dimension of Islamic teachings were revealed – a relationship often represented as a series of concentric circles, moving from the *zahir* to the *batin*. Likewise, the presence of the Qurʾanic light verse (Qur'an 24:35) had particular significance to the Ismaʿili faithful, since light itself was a common metaphor for the esoteric knowledge transferred to the Shiʿi imams and a metaphor for the family of the Prophet (Bierman 1998a: 82–84; Bloom 1983: 19; Sanders 1994: 41; Williams 1983: 46–48). Other aspects of the inscriptional program made overt references to the *ahl al-bayt* – the "people of the House," referring to the family of the Prophet – the Fatimid rulers. The sectarian function of inscriptions under the Fatimids in this period can also be seen in the large-scale anti-Sunni "cursing of the Companions" (of the Prophet Muhammad) inscribed throughout the city of Cairo-Fustat, sponsored by al-Hakim in 1005. (Pruitt 2013: 123–124). Al-Hakim ordered the covering of these unique towers in 1010, replacing them with austere bastions, more similar to those found at al-Mahdiyya, featuring a single line of Qurʾanic text. While the reasons for this effacement have been debated, the shift is most likely related to the large-scale changes in Fatimid ideology in al-Hakim's later reign (Bierman 1998a: 93–95; Pruitt 2009: 240–262; Sanders 1994: 58–61).

Court Ceremonies and Religious Rituals

Across the realms of the three caliphates, royal cities and their adjacent established urban centers were used as stages for court ceremonies. Descriptions of diplomatic receptions in the courts at Baghdad, Cordoba, Madinat al-Zahraʾ, al-Mansuriyya, and Cairo in the tenth and early eleventh centuries reveal a shared international ceremonial language that crossed political and religious divisions, and was also shared to some extent with the Byzantine court. In all three capitals windows (*shababik*) of appearance on palace gates provided the caliph with a privileged view and created an architectural representation of the caliph's gaze. Ambassadors were led through winding palace routes, through spaces in which soldiers, palace functionaries, and rich textiles and luxury objects were gathered and displayed, until finally reaching the secluded caliph. All three caliphates placed great emphasis on display in palaces meant to evoke wonder in observers: thus we read of sophisticated mechanical devices, such as automata, impressive waterworks, mercury pools, and displays of rare and precious objects (Anderson 2013: 111–113, 174; Grabar 1987: 169–173; al-Qaddumi 1996: 166–224). The separation of palace from mosque and the use of processions between the Friday mosques and palace became a feature of ceremony in Samarra and Cairo (Canard 1951: 355–420; Hilal al-Sabi 1977; Sanders 1994: 38–82). The Cordoban Umayyads likewise instigated ceremonial processions between the palace and mosque from Cordoba to their suburban city of Madinat al-Zahraʾ, incorporating their suburban estates along the routes (Anderson 2013: 152–154).

Caliphs had their own distinguishing regalia and caliphal symbols. Across the caliphates, prerogatives such as the naming of the caliph in the Friday sermon (*khutba*), minting coins with the ruler's name, formal titulature, and the production of textiles (*tiraz*) inscribed with the ruler's name acted as formal signs of caliphal legitimacy (Figure 9.8). In highly regimented ceremonial practices, caliphal wealth, majesty, and power were conveyed through the display of multitudes of rare and costly objects and people (heavily armed soldiers, groups of palace functionaries, and members of the extended caliphal household) within the palatial settings of the caliphal capitals. Ritualized gestures, such as bowing before the ruler, kissing the ground in front of him, formal programs of mounting and dismounting horses, and other prescribed acts dictated caliphal ceremonial protocol (*rusum*) (Sanders 1994: 13–37). Nevertheless, each caliphal dynasty also placed its own particular imprint upon such ceremonies.

The court ceremonies of the Abbasids were set largely within the main public palaces of Samarra and Baghdad. In 917, for example, the palaces of al-Muqtadir

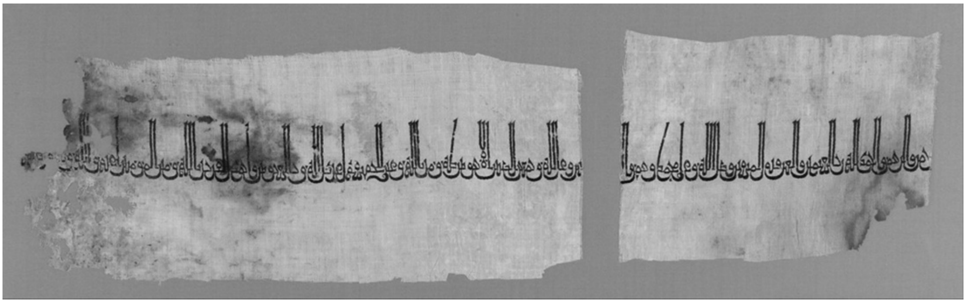

Figure 9.8 Abbasid *tiraz*, 991–1031. Its inscription reads: “Bismillah. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds, and a good end to those who fear God. And God bless Muhammad the seal of the Prophets, and all his family, the good, the excellent. Blessing from God and glory to the Caliph, the servant of God, Abu’l-ʿAbbas Ahmad, al-Qadir billah, Commander of the Faithful, may God glorify him and [. . .].” 31.106.56a. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

in Baghdad served as the splendid setting for the reception of a Byzantine embassy, in which the ambassadors were led past such marvels as vast lead-lined ponds and streams and a tree crafted of silver and gold, complete with mechanical singing birds (al-Qaddumi 1996: 148–155). The monumental scale of Abbasid court ceremonial as described in this account, involving great numbers of people and objects, all formally arrayed to make the greatest impression of caliphal majesty upon the visiting dignitaries is echoed in the vast scale of the remains of the caliphal palace at Samarra (Grabar 1987: 169–173).

The Cordoban Umayyads generally shared in the conception of rulership and its articulation in court culture as defined by their Umayyad predecessors as well as their Abbasid and Fatimid contemporaries. But their ceremonial practices, while comparable in terms of the emphasis on strict protocol and the display of luxury objects, for instance, diverged in other ways from those of both the Abbasids and the Fatimids. The movements of the sovereign and his court were occasions for elaborate public processions and public spectacles, in and around Cordoba (Anderson 2013: 138–143; Chalmeta 1960–2007). Celebrations of major religious festivals, receptions of foreign ambassadors, the departure or triumphant return of military expeditions, and military reviews by the caliph and court, were all occasions for ceremony. These took the form of court feasts, processions that included the ruler, notables of the court and of the military, as well as highly staged appearances of the Umayyad caliph and his heir in public places such as major palace gates or within palace reception halls. The caliph, shaded with a parasol of rich cloth, was accompanied not only by important members of his family and court but also by flag bearers flying banners ornamented with eagle motifs, musicians playing drums and perhaps horns, and mounted troops splendidly arrayed in special armor.

Such public and private spectacles also characterized the court culture of the Fatimid rulers of Egypt. In the early years of Fatimid rule of Cairo, many of the ceremonial processions were focused on the palace and the open-air praying space, the *musalla*. In the month of his arrival in Cairo, the caliph al-Muʿizz held a reception in which he was seated upon a golden throne within the palace, while visited by dignitaries, reminiscent of similar descriptions in the Abbasid court (al-Qaddumi 1996; Sanders 1994: 46). Religious celebrations also marked opportunities for ceremonial display in the early Fatimid caliphate. The celebration of the two *ʿid*s and Ramadan were particularly important for the early Fatimid rulers (Sanders 1994: 39–67). In this case, unlike the palatial reception, the imam-caliph's procession through the city was an important aspect of the ceremonial display. In 973, al-Muʿizz is recorded as celebrating *ʿid al-fitr* at the *musalla*, where he led prayer and displayed the *shamsa*, a circular jewel-encrusted ornament, which would be added to the *kiswa*, the cover given to the Kaʿba. At the *musalla*, the imam-caliph led the congregational prayers from the minbar, with a theatrical use of banners to conceal and reveal him to his audience. The dramatic covering and revealing of the caliph followed the protocol of both the Abbasids and Sasanians. Following the congregational prayer, the imam-caliph processed to the palace, accompanied by a crowd and two elephants. The strict hierarchical protocol was ensured by the chief *qadi* (judge), who arranged the seated Ismaʿilis by rank (Sanders 1994: 47).

Under the caliph al-ʿAziz, ceremonial practices were expanded to include Ramadan celebrations, where the imam-caliph would process from the palace to the *musalla* and later to the Mosque of al-Hakim, while a crowd of followers, seated on strategically placed benches, recited "God is Great." The imam-caliph processed with his troops and horses, under a bejeweled parasol, carrying a staff of the Prophet Muhammad in his hand (Sanders 1994: 48–52). The boundaries of ceremonial space were expanded under the third Egyptian caliph, al-Hakim, who built new monuments in Fustat and the Qarafa cemetery to the south of the city, integrating all of these spaces in his ceremonial processions. The increased movement and accessibility of the caliph in this time is demonstrated in al-Maqrizi's record of common people coming between the caliph and his entourage as he processed to the Rashida Mosque and Mosque of ʿAmr, to the south of the royal city in Fustat (Sanders 1994: 52–63).

It is in the incorporation of urban procession beyond the palace-city of Cairo that Fatimid ceremonial differed significantly from its Abbasid counterpart. While Abbasid ceremonial was generally more confined to the palace or to open spaces that preceded its main entrance, the Fatimids increasingly integrated the urban environment into their ceremonial. More significantly, through the system of Ismaʿili allegorical interpretation, the *meaning* of the Fatimid ceremonial had an esoteric dimension not shared by that of their caliphal rivals. Sanders has argued that while the visible signs of ceremonial practice were similar to the other caliphates, the meaning of the rituals had deeper allegorical significance to the Ismaʿili faithful, who understood the *batin* (esoteric) dimensions of the *zahir* (exoteric) acts (Sanders 1994: 5–11). The meaning of these rituals in the early years of Fatimid Egypt were outlined and prescribed by the Ismaʿili jurist, Qadi al-Nuʿman (d. 974). For example, according to al-Nuʿman, standing before the Fatimid imam-caliph was not simply a political act but equivalent to standing before God in prayer, a dimension of meaning not shared by the Cordoban Umayyads and Abbasids (Sanders 1994: 16–18). Similarly, in the Fatimid context objects belonging to the caliph, or inscribed with his name, held a sacred status, something not shared by the other caliphates.

The spectacle orchestrated around visits of Byzantine envoys was another commonality in the ceremonial practices of the three courts. In 952–953, for example, the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII sent a monk-ambassador to al-Mansuriyya to renew a truce with the Fatimids. The Byzantine envoy brought silk textiles, gold and silver vessels, and other precious gifts (Bloom 2007: 41). The acquisition of such riches by the Fatimid treasury was repeated in a visit by the Byzantines to Cairo and the court of the Fatimid caliph al-Muʿizz in 972, in which the Byzantine visitors bestowed on the caliph horse trappings originally used by Alexander the Great (Grabar 1997: 122). While the Abbasid ceremonial practices were largely located within or in front of the palace, elaborate urban processions of the Fatimids were analogous to Byzantine ceremonial practices. This emphasis on ridership as a form of ceremonial practice was recognized by horse-related gifts given by the Byzantines to the Fatimid rulers, including the previously mentioned gift to al-Muʿizz, and a gift of embellished saddles to the caliph al-Mustansir (r. 1036–1094) by the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1042–1055) and empress Zoe (Soucek 1997: 407).

Conclusions: The Waning of Caliphal Competition

The ongoing competition between the Cordoban Umayyad caliphate (now under the control of the Amirid regency) and the Fatimids and their allies in North Africa continued to have artistic ramifications at the end of the tenth century and in the first half of the eleventh, but the political changes of the mid-eleventh century constitute the end of the period under consideration here. After 1038 *de facto* power within the Baghdad caliphate passed to the Seljuqs, while in 1058, when the Abbasids were defeated by the Fatimids, the ceremonial *shubbak* (window) within which they had appeared was sent to the Fatimid caliph in Cairo, along with the robes and turban of the Abbasid caliph, as a sign of Abbasid defeat (Behrens-Abouseif 1992: 34; Sanders 2001: 228–229). In Cordoba, the Umayyad caliphate, which the Amirid regents had carefully upheld despite consolidating their hold on effective political power, did not withstand the battles over caliphal succession among various claimants to the title, or the disruption to social life that accompanied the turbulent *fitna* (revolution) of 1030, and the Cordoban Umayyad caliphate was officially dissolved in 1031. In the social upheaval that marked this period in the Andalusi capital's history, Cordoba and Madinat al-Zahraʾ were irreparably damaged. Madinat al-Zahraʾ was sacked and burned, its ruins serving for some time as a reminder to later Islamic rulers of the fleeting nature of earthly power, before disappearing almost entirely from the Cordoban landscape.

To the east, in Cairo the Fatimids continued the spirit of caliphal competition against the Abbasids after the disintegration of the Cordoban Umayyad caliphate. In this contest for caliphal authority, the Byzantines played a key role. The Byzantine emperors saw in the Cordoban Umayyads an ally against both the Abbasids, with whom they clashed along frontier territories in the central Islamic lands, and the Fatimids, with whom they fought over territories in the western Mediterranean, on the coast of North Africa and Sicily. For instance, a 987 treaty between Emperor Basil II and the Fatimid caliph al-ʿAziz specified that the oath of allegiance (*khutba*) to the caliph, a key aspect of Friday prayers, be pronounced in the mosque of Constantinople in the name of the Fatimid caliph (Anderson 2009: 99–100). A century later, Empress Theodora broke the oath with the Fatimids by agreeing to have the *khutba* in the Constantinople mosque pronounced in the name of the Seljuq ruler Tughril Beg. At around the same time, the name of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim was read in the *khutba* in Abbasid realms, which were then under the control of the Buyids, another Shiʿi dynasty (Pruitt 2013: 129). Pilgrimage also became a site of Fatimid–Abbasid competition. The Fatimid caliph al-Zahir (r. 1021–1036) restored the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem in Umayyad style but with inscriptions bearing Fatimid titles, and gave gifts to pilgrims traveling to Mecca and Medina from Abbasid realms. In 1023, when Sunni pilgrims from Ghazni entered Fatimid territory, he gave them 1000 dinars, luxurious garments, and robes of honor, as a reminder that the Fatimids controlled the holy cities. In response, the Abbasid caliph al-Qadir (r. 991–1031) demanded that these garments be burned publicly (Sanders 2001: 229).

Thereafter, the scale of architectural patronage declined relative to that of earlier monuments founded during the zenith of caliphal competition. In 1125 a new type of monument, oriented toward the city, smaller in scale, and expressing the importance of vizierial – as well as caliphal - rule in its inscriptions appeared in the lavishly ornamented Mosque of al-Aqmar, built in close proximity to the Fatimid palace complex of Cairo (Behrens-Abouseif 1992; Williams 1983). In Egypt, the claim for caliphal power waned as Fatimid territory shrunk and viziers increasingly controlled the empire, exemplified by the arrival of the Armenian vizier Badr al-Jamali in the city in 1073, following a series of crises, which weakened the Fatimid caliphate significantly. Later Fatimid architectural patronage was characterized by smaller commissions, with particular prominence given to *mashhads* (shrines) and saints' tombs (Williams 1985). While these later years of Fatimid rule were characterized by the increasing prominence of viziers and vastly shrinking territories, the rhetoric of caliphal competition continued. Nevertheless, the final blow to the prominence of the caliphates came in 1055, when the Sunni Seljuqs wrested Baghdad from Shiʿi Buyid control, thereby ushering in what has been characterized as a period of Sunni Revival and the end of the tenth-century zenith of caliphal competition.

Notes

1 The extent to which the city was reserved for the Ismaʿili court during the early caliphal period is a matter of scholarly debate. While some scholars have suggested that the walled city of al-Qahira was meant for the Ismaʿili court, Jonathan Bloom has argued that the city was open, even in the early years of its foundation (Abu-Lughod 1971: 14, 19; Bloom 2000; 2007: 58–59; Bierman 1998a: 72–74; Sanders 1994).

2 Many of the most beautiful and unique examples of architectural ornament from the Fatimid period may postdate the scope of this chapter. See Bloom 2007: 117–156; Tabbaa 2001: 81–83.

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10

Early Islam on the East African Coast

Mark Horton

Introduction

The East African or Swahili coast (Map 10.1) extends along some 3000 km of coastline and ocean from Mogadishu in the north to northern Madagascar in the south, and includes the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, Mafia, and the Kirimba and Comoro archipelagos (Horton and Middleton 2000: 5). This huge area developed linked cultural identities through maritime communication, enabled via relatively sheltered sea passages and the seasonal reversal of monsoons that blow along the coast. Most of the coastal communities speak or spoke Swahili, a Bantu language, in its various dialect forms – exceptions being northern Madagascar, where Malagasy was probably always the primary language; and the area around Mogadishu, where Somali probably replaced Swahili in the last 500 years. The southern limit of Swahili speakers nowadays is the Kirimba islands, although maritime contact formally extended further south along the Mozambique coast. Today Islam is widespread, but before the nineteenth century was confined to the narrow coastal strip and islands. The Muslim communities in northern Madagascar date from the eleventh century and probably died out in the sixteenth century, therefore Muslims living there nowadays are of recent origin (Radimilahy 1998; Vérin 1986: 67).

The economy of these coastal communities was linked to the sea – both as a form of communication and for food – of which fish and shellfish were always important (Horton and Mudida 1993; Quintana Morales and Horton 2014). Located along the rim of the Indian Ocean, they were also able to act as gateways into the African interior for the supply of commodities in and out of the continent. These ranged from high value items such as gold, ivory, quartz crystal,

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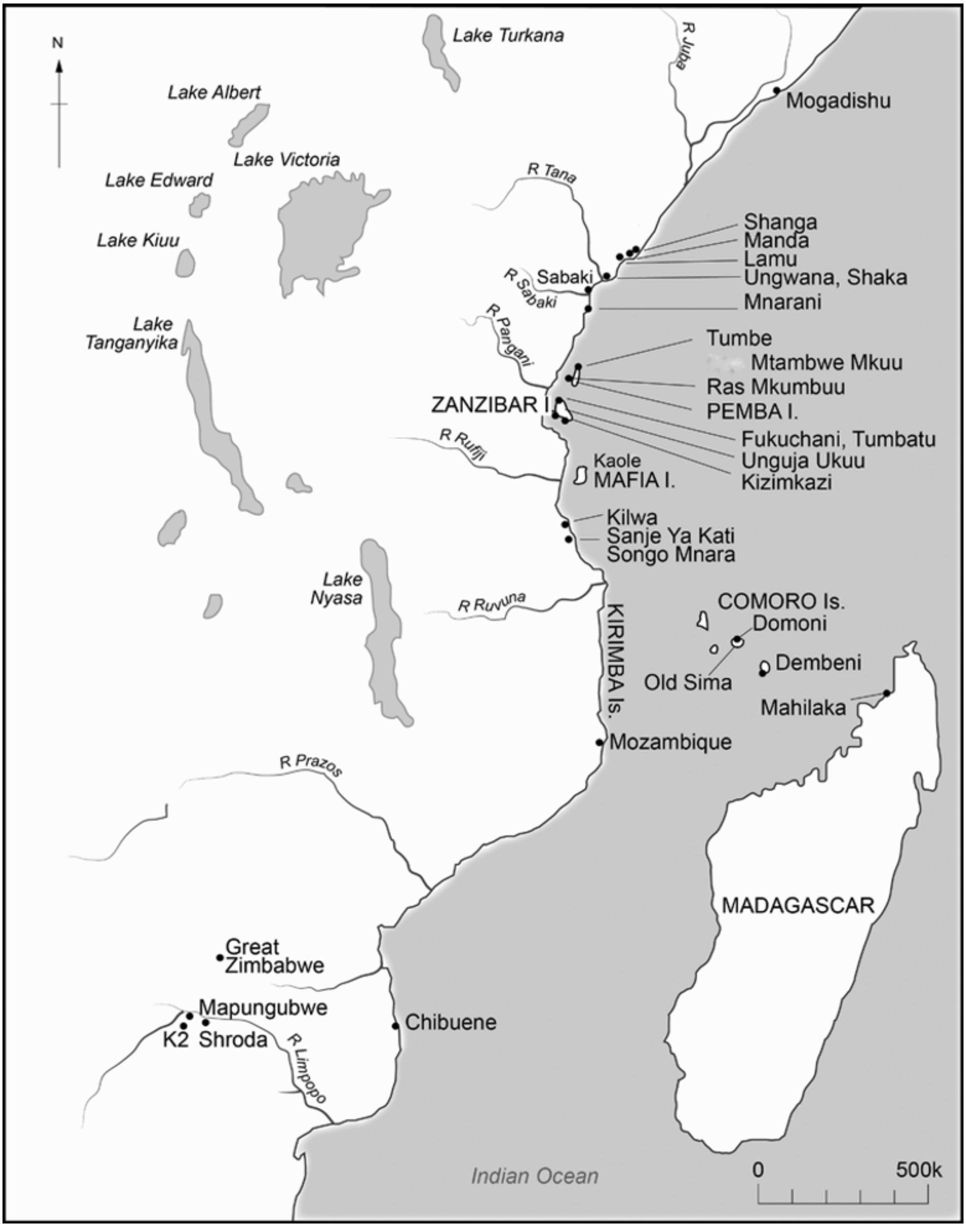
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R Juba
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Lake Albert
Lake Victoria
Lake Edward
Lake Kiuu
R Tana
Shanga
Manda
Lamu
Ungwana, Shaka
Sabaki
R Sabaki
Mnarani
Lake
Tanganyika
R Pangani
Tumbe
Mtambwe Mkuu
Ras Mkumbuu
ZANZIBAR I.
PEMBA I.
Fukuchani, Tumbatu
Unguja Ukuu
Kizimkazi
R Rufiji
Kaole
MAFIA I.
Kilwa
Sanje Ya Kati
Songo Mnara
Lake
Nyasa
R Ruvuna
KIRIMBA Is.
COMORO Is.
Domoni
Dembeni
Old Sima
Mahilaka
Mozambique
R Prazos
MADAGASCAR
Great
Zimbabwe
Mapungubwe
K2
Shroda
R Limpopo
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Indian Ocean
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Map 10.1 Map of East Africa showing sites mentioned in the text. Source: Mark Horton/Sue Grice. Reproduced with permission.

copper, iron, and skins to goods that were more bulky – including timber and at various times slaves, supplying in return cloth, iron tools, and beads into the interior (Horton and Middleton 2000: 13). Port-cities developed both on the coast and adjacent islands that were able to exploit their strategic position within the monsoon trading system on the coast of Africa. They often developed from small villages strung along the beach, whose primary focus may have been fishing or farming but which could, over time, grow to sizable settlements with populations as large as 10 000 inhabitants. Each port or coastal village remained largely independent of others, although some may have claimed control over adjacent settlements on which they relied for the supply of food and trade commodities. A particular feature of all the settlements was their craft production – such as cloth, iron working, and bead production – some of which was consumed locally but much was probably employed in trade within the Indian Ocean world as well as into the interior of Africa.

In older historical interpretations, the Swahili coast was "colonized" by merchants from the Arab and Persian worlds, so the question of Islamic origins was closely linked to putative settlement from western Asia along the coastal littoral, possibly as late as the ninth century (Chittick 1984: 217–220). More recent interpretations have stressed the indigenous nature of coastal communities and find little evidence for large-scale western Asiatic colonization but, instead, a much longer period of trade and contact (Chami 2006, 2009; Kusimba 1999). The East African coast was inhabited by both hunter-gatherers and fishing and farming communities who had access to maritime technology well before the arrival of Islam. While *The Periplus of Erythreaen Sea* describes a flourishing trade between southern Arabia and East Africa in the first century, it remains unclear whether this involved the Late Stone Age or Early Iron Age communities or indeed both (Casson 1989; Horton 1990). At present, the material culture of either does not include any well-proven imports from beyond the East African region. The first archaeological evidence that East Africa was connected to the maritime trading systems of the western Indian Ocean comes from the late seventh century. Imported pottery appears mixed in with locally produced Middle Iron Age wares, as well as glass, metalwork, and glass and stone beads.

In the mid-eighth century there is a "take-off" in the scale of overseas trade in these coastal communities. Key sites include Unguja Ukuu (Zanzibar), Tumbe (Pemba), Shanga and Manda (Lamu archipelago) (Chittick 1984; Horton 1996 and forthcoming; Juma 2004). Imports found on these Middle Iron Age coastal sites include unglazed "torpedo jars" from the Gulf, turquoise-glazed wares, sometimes called Sasanian-Islamic pottery, and unglazed eggshell and white wares. In the ninth century, Islamic white-glazed wares and lusterwares were added to this assemblage. The range of ceramics and glass are comparable to those found in Gulf ports such as Siraf and Sohar, and these are most likely the immediate source. Imported pottery typically forms between 3 and 5 percent of the assemblages, although one site, Unguja Ukuu has over 12 percent (Horton forthcoming). The bulk of the ceramics on all these sites is local Middle Iron Age pottery, known as Tana tradition (Fleisher and Wynne-Jones 2011).

While the bulk of ceramics between 700 and 1250 derive from the Gulf, there are also small quantities of pottery of South Asian origin and East Asian stonewares (Changsha and Yue olive-green glazed jars). Glass beads, the Indo-Pacific series, are also found, having been traded largely from southern India and Sri Lanka (Horton 1996, forthcoming; Fleisher and LaViolette 2013). A remarkable lion figurine (Figure 10.1) from Shanga, dating to the eleventh century, was very similar to Hindu examples from the Deccan but was most likely cast in East Africa, pointing to the residence of Asian artisans working in an Islamic milieu. They may also have been involved in cloth production, stone work, including crystal, and glass bead-making (Horton 2007).

The Comoro archipelago – offshore islands of volcanic origin – were also settled from the late eighth century with sites on all the larger islands (Wright 1984).

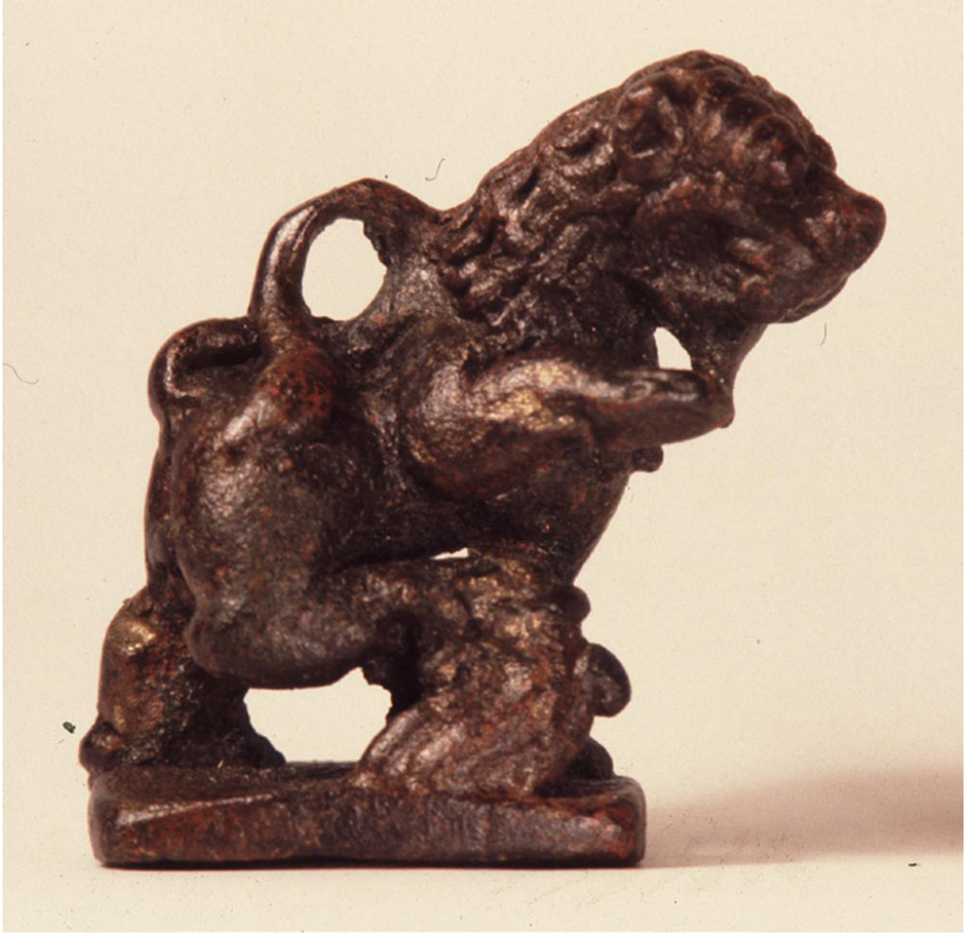

Figure 10.1 The Shanga lion, a “Hindu” style figurine, probably produced in Islamic East Africa. Source: Mark Horton. Reproduced with permission.

A similar range of imported pottery and glass suggests that they too were important trading centers with connections to the Gulf – possibly as secure intermediaries between the Indian Ocean world and the mainland of Africa and Madagascar, and a possible terminus for direct trade with Southeast Asia (Boivin *et al.* 2013).

The period of greatest prosperity seems to have lasted for only hundred or so years, and by the tenth century several of the early towns were in decline – if not actually abandoned. This was shown at Unguja Ukuu and Tumbe, where sites of over 20 hectares only covered a very small area. At Shanga and Manda there was significant disruption in the tenth century, and abandonment of numerous buildings. These shifts in fortune may be linked to the fortunes of Gulf ports – Siraf suffered a series of earthquakes in the late tenth century (Whitehouse 1978) – and possibly also to the decline of the slave trade in the aftermath of the Zanj revolt (868–882), during which large numbers of African slaves in Iraq rebelled.

Reconstructing the ethnicity of the merchants during this period in the Indian Ocean always presents problems. Two of the narratives – that of al-Masʿudi, who visited East Africa in 916 (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 14), and the *Al-Sahih min akhbar al-bahr wa-ʿajaʾibiha* (Authentic Tales of the Sea and its Wonders), a collection of sailors' tales compiled in Cairo in the 960s (Ducène 2010; Freeman-Grenville 1981: 31) – identify ship captains by name, who came from Oman and Siraf. However, it seems that many regions of the Indian Ocean were involved, ranging from southern Arabia to western and southern India. Jewish merchants appear to have played little part in the East African trade, with virtually no reference to African commodities in the *Geniza "India Book"* (Goitein and Friedman 2011: 16). East Africans seem to have moved widely through the western India Ocean, and not just as slaves. At Sharma, in the southern Arabian coast, significant quantities of eleventh-century African pottery have been found, probably originating from Pemba Island, while other find spots include Ras el-Hadd (Oman) and Siraf.

East African Islam and its Architecture

These indigenous, Bantu-speaking Africans probably converted to Islam through trade. The first secure documentary evidence for the presence of Islam dates to the early tenth century. In 916, the veteran traveler, al-Masʿudi sailed to the East African port of Qanbalu, probably located on Pemba Island, a key location in the center of the coast, extremely fertile and around 30 miles from the mainland. Here he encountered a small Muslim community, including the royal family, living within a non-Muslim population. He noted that this community spoke the local language, had arrived on the island around 750, and recorded a historical tradition that this community had subjected its population "in the same manner as the conquest of Crete" (Trimingham 1975: 130–131) – apparently a reference to the Andalusian capture of Crete using naval forces in the 820s. Given that al-Masʿudi was writing 166 years after the arrival of Muslims at Qanbalu, the naval aspects of this settlement may have been rather overstated, but it does seem that a small number of Muslims may have settled at this time on Pemba, and over time became assimilated into the local population. A possible context for this may have been the expansion of the interests of the conservative Ibadi denomination of Islam down the East African coast, during the period of the first Imamate (*c.* 750–790) based in Oman (Horton 2013; Horton and Middleton 2000: 64–67). These Ibadis were connected to Kharijite merchants in Abbasid Basra, and especially with the development of the trade in Zanj (East African) slaves, up until the Zanj revolt. The austere egalitarian ethos of Ibadis generally found expression in modest mosques with shallow mihrabs, lacking minarets and minbars.

East Africa never became part of the Abbasid caliphate and was in the *dar al-harb* (lit. abode of war, that is, lands not under the rule of Muslims), and as such Muslims were technically not allowed to settle there or to convert the local inhabitants to Islam. Part of the reason for these prohibitions was to protect the slave trade – converted Africans could technically not be enslaved – and commercial realities more than theological and legal niceties restricted the spread of Islam beyond a few offshore islands. However, because of both the lush and fertile nature of the region and the valuable products it could produce, it is not surprising that some Muslims reached East Africa in the early years of Islam and the local elites embraced Islam through this contact.

Another account provides a slightly different mechanism for conversion. Almost contemporary to that of al-Masʿudi, the *Authentic Tales of the Sea and its Wonders* (Ducène 2010) recorded a slaving voyage in 922 to East Africa (Freeman-Grenville 1981: 31–36). The story related how a local ruler on the Sufala coast (around the area of Mozambique) was captured and sold into slavery but managed to return to his homeland, having been converted to Islam while in the Middle East. When the slavers returned many years later they found the ruler returned to his community but now a Muslim. He forgave his captors, “for no man else in the land of the Zanj has obtained a similar favor” (Freeman-Grenville 1981). While returning escaped slaves may have been a rare event, it does suggest that Islam could have spread back to the region from the large number of Zanj slaves employed in southern Iraq, some of whom had converted to Islam.

Local East African histories hint at a further mechanism – that of the arrival of religious refugees from the Middle East. The Portuguese historian De Barros recorded one migration, taken from the *History of Kilwa* in the mid-sixteenth century but referring to a much earlier period. These were the “Emozaydy” (Umma Zaydi, the “followers of Zaydi”): Shiʿa groups living in the Yemen from the late eighth century onwards who were periodically oppressed by the Abbasid caliphate yet eventually managed to form a state in the tenth century. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries geographers and travelers begin to record Islamic communities on a more systematic basis. Al-Idrisi describes the Comoro Islands (Djawaga islands), which includes the island of Anjouan, probably Old Sima

(Wright 1984), "whose people, although mixed are actually mostly Muslims" (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 19). In the early thirteenth century Yaqut located Muslim communities in Mogadishu, Pemba, Zanzibar, and Tumbatu, but Ibn Saʿid, writing at the same time, claimed that Malindi and Mombasa were not Muslim. Ibn al-Mujawir, writing in 1232, claimed that Kilwa had reverted to Kharijite or Ibadi Islam from a type of Sunni Islam affiliated with the Shafiʿi school of jurisprudence (Trimingham 1964: 17, 1975: 122–135). By the time of Ibn Battuta's visit to Mogadishu, Mombasa, and Kilwa in 1331, the whole coast was both Muslim and Sunni/Shafiʿi (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 27–32). This was probably the result of missionary activity, and the movement of noble or sharifian families from Arabia from the twelfth century onwards (Horton and Middleton 2000: 68–70; Martin 1974). This success of Sunni Islam may have disguised the much more heterodox situation in earlier centuries.

Accurate dating for Islam on the East African coast can be obtained through Islamic burials, early mosques, and locally minted coins with Islamic inscriptions from the late eighth century. This chronology relies on radiocarbon dating and assemblages of imported Islamic and Far Eastern ceramics. At Shanga in the Lamu archipelago and Ras Mkumbuu on Pemba Island, deposits below later stone mosques have been excavated and remains of earlier timber mosques have been found. Miniscule silver coins from Shanga and Manda dating to the early ninth century contain very simple Arabic inscriptions, indicating a local degree of literacy in Arabic, and possible connections to Sind, where similar coins have been found (Horton 1996).

The clearest material for early Islam comes from the site of Shanga, excavated in the 1980s (Horton 1996, 2004). Located on the northern coast and therefore closer to the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, this area would be expected to have been an early location for conversion. Shanga was Islamic from very close to its foundation around 750. The rulers of Shanga also seemed to have produced their own miniscule silver coins – with links to some of the coins issued by the Amirs of Sind and Multan (Horton 2007: 76) bearing simple Arabic inscriptions (Figure 10.2).

The early plan of the settlement was centered on a natural depression in the sand dunes that contained a well or waterhole, and some large trees, possibly forming a sacred area. One of these trees was chopped down and its stump burnt out – perhaps reflecting a concern in early Islam that trees could become an object of worship (Necipoğlu 2008: 196). Over this was constructed a small rectangular timber mosque, building A, in the late eighth century (Figure 10.3). Its size was only 4.64 × 2.89 m, around 12 m^2 and would have had a capacity of around 10 worshippers. The floor was made of silt brought from the mangroves, and laid to produce a clean level surface; the walls were supported on timber posts. There was no trace of any mihrab, but the orientation of 310° was identical to near contemporary Islamic burials on the site – positioned in the standard way on their right shoulder facing towards Mecca.

The second mosque (B) overlying this comprised an oval spread of small pebbles, covering a similar area to the first mosque. This may have been the floor of a tent, as no post holes were found. Similar tents are known ethnographically in

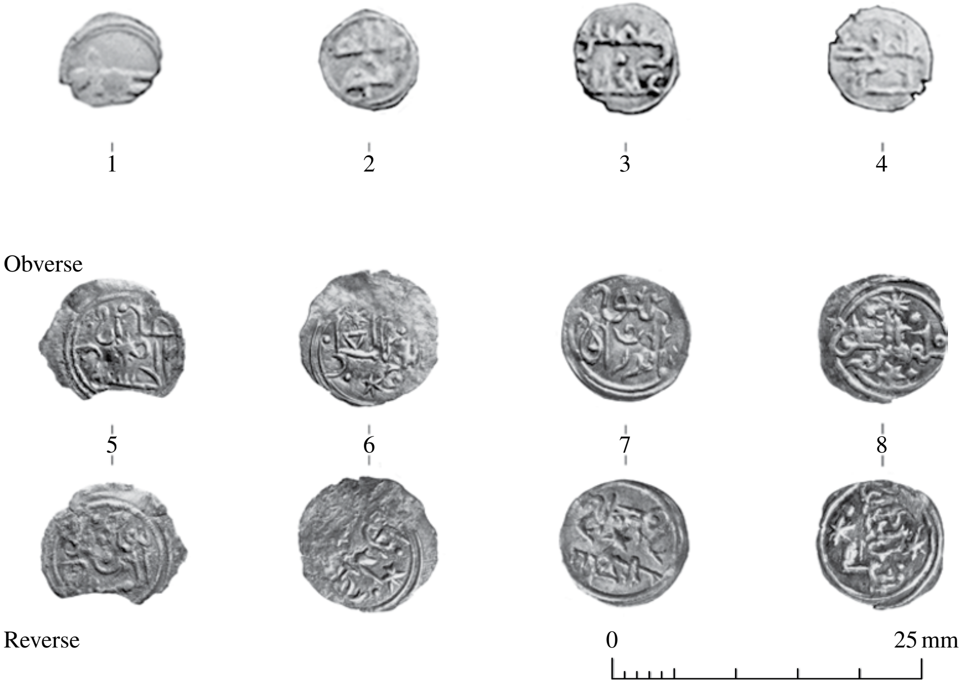

FIGURE 10.2 Locally minted silver coins from East Africa: 1, 2 Shanga, Muhammad, eighth or early ninth century; 3, 4 Shanga, ʿAbd Allah, ninth or early tenth century; 5–8, Mtambwe Mkuu, tenth–early eleventh century. Source: Mark Horton. Reproduced with permission.

East Africa that would produce an oval shape. Pebbles on the floor were described by al-Muqaddasi at the Umayyad mosque at Tiberias (Cytryn-Silverman 2009: 38) and reminiscent of practices apparently employed in the earliest mosques of Islam – including the first mosque of Amr in Fustat (641–642) and the mosque at Basra, rebuilt by Ziyad ibn Abihi in 665 (Creswell and Allen 1989: 9).

The next succession of mosques comprised five superimposed timber buildings (C–G), spanning the ninth and early tenth centuries. They had very similar characteristics of silt floor, wall trenches and timber uprights, central posts, and in one case (building E) walls that comprised thin upright sticks, probably of mangrove timber. The prayer halls of each had similar proportions as the earliest mosque broadly 2:1, or slightly less. By the time of building D, there was a small anteroom added on the south side, through which the mosque was entered. The first possible inbuilt mihrab (earlier ones may have been portable) appeared in the late ninth century with building F, and was a large post in the north wall. The final timber building, mosque G, was the most substantial, with an eastern side room and a praying area of at least 54 m^2 – with a capacity of over 50 worshippers. All these mosques employed a cubit of 518 mm, a unit widely used in early Islamic architecture in the Middle East (Creswell and Allen 1989: 10).

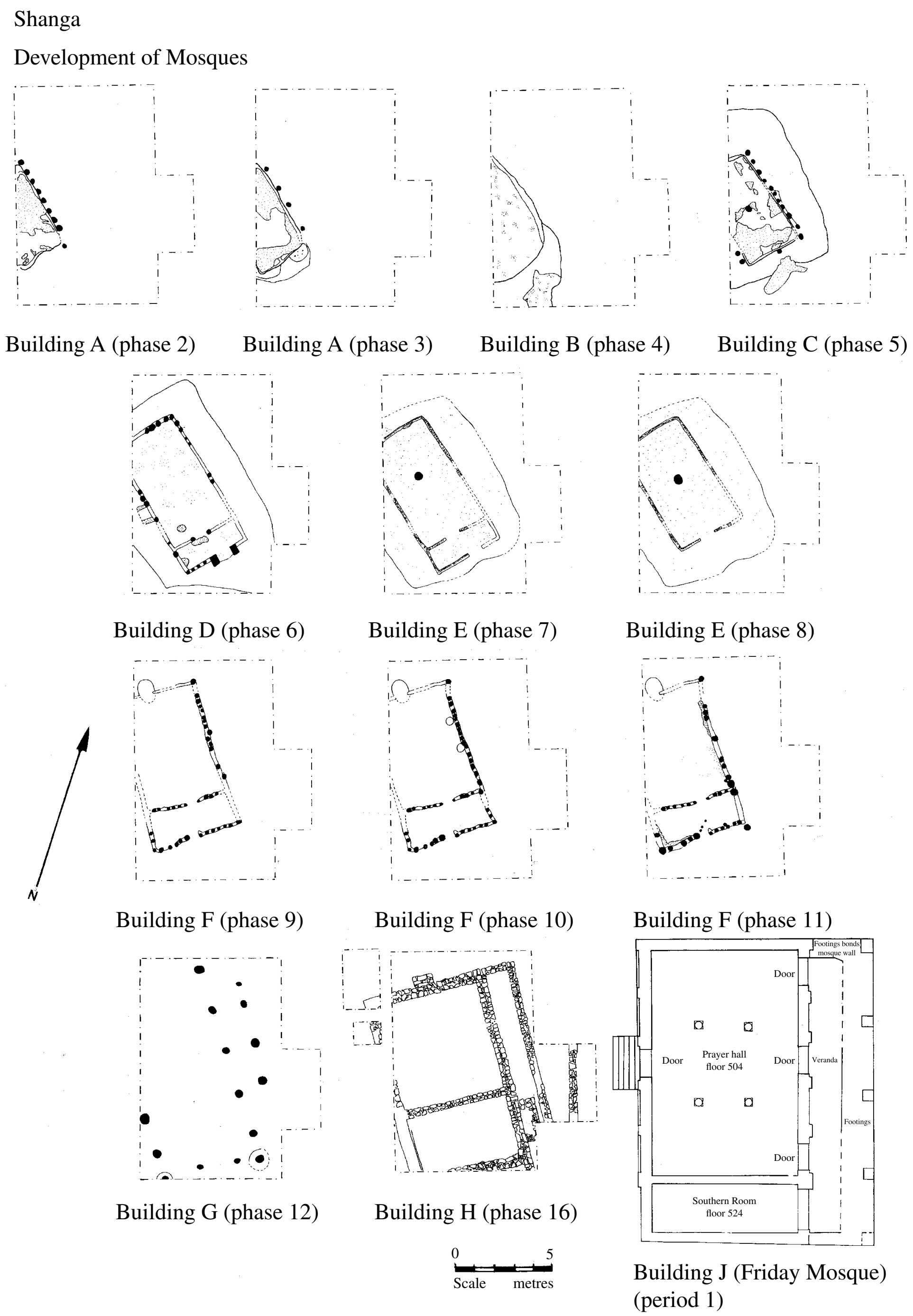
Shanga
Development of Mosques
Building A (phase 2)
Building A (phase 3)
Building B (phase 4)
Building C (phase 5)
Building D (phase 6)
Building E (phase 7)
Building E (phase 8)
N
Building F (phase 9)
Building F (phase 10)
Building F (phase 11)
Building G (phase 12)
Building H (phase 16)
Footings bonds mosque wall
Door
Door
Prayer hall floor 504
Door
Veranda
Footings
Door
Southern Room floor 524
0
5
Scale
metres
Building J (Friday Mosque) (period 1)

Figure 10.3 Development sequence of the Shanga mosques, eighth–eleventh century. Source: Mark Horton. Reproduced with permission.

In the early tenth century, these timber buildings were replaced by a stone mosque, building H, built with *porites* (undersea cut-coral) with a square prayer hall, 5.4 m^2, so using a cubit of 540 mm and a southern room – a form and size closely following the small mosques at Siraf in the Gulf (Creswell and Allen 1989: 414). There were traces of a mihrab in the north wall, formed by a projecting rectangular salient. At some point a small stair was added in its southeast corner that may have served as a staircase minaret leading to the roof of the mosque. Elsewhere on the site, there was a similar transition from timber to stone building, and the introduction of *porites* architecture represents the adoption of a specialist technology. The walls were bonded with mud mortar and faced with lime plaster – also employed as the floor surfaces, which were raised on a platform of sand.

This stone mosque lasted for about 100 years, before being replaced around 1000 with a much larger stone mosque, the Shanga "Friday Mosque," this time with a rectangular prayer hall (11.22 × 7.21 m, using the 534 mm cubit) and an integrated southern room. The mosque was entered from the sides, as well as the south, and like its predecessor had a plaster floor raised on a platform of beach sand, with four internal columns. Unfortunately a mihrab that was later inserted removed traces of any earlier mihrab, although it was likely to have been either very much smaller or set within the thickness of the wall.

This succession of nine mosques spanning around 220 years, between the late eighth and eleventh centuries provides an unrivalled sequence to understanding the expansion of Islam and the development of its architectural features. In terms of size, the praying area increases from around 10 persons in the late eighth century to around 80 in the eleventh century. This may reflect partly the growth of settlement size but also the Islamization of the community more widely. These mosques were not simply for visiting merchants – as is clear from the Islamic burials that included several burials of children – but were used by the local African community. It is possible that there was a Muslim élite, but such a judgment depends on accurate estimates for the size of the community and what proportion of adult males actually used the mosque on a regular basis. More likely, Shanga was largely a Muslim settlement from close to its foundation.

Another mosque excavation has a similar sequence. Ras Mkumbuu on Pemba Island, is a candidate for al-Masʿudi's Qanbalu, which he visited in 916, describing its Muslim ruler (Horton forthcoming; Trimingham 1975: 130–131). Here the early town was identified on the top of a plateau, overlooking the harbor. Excavation of the central mound replicated the sequence at Shanga, with an early timber building around 8.4 × 4.8 m, made of timber and daub – fragments of which suggested upright sticks with a diameter of 70 mm, spaced at intervals of around 110 mm – almost identical to that employed in the Shanga "stick mosque." A stone mosque overlay this – 9.35 × 5.90 m (using the 534 cubit and proportions of 3:2) – accommodating around 50 (and possibly the very mosque that al-Masʿudi might have prayed in). The north/mihrab wall had disappeared in the robbing process, but the wall seems to have been of double thickness and perhaps had its mihrab set within the thickness of the wall, suggesting an Ibadi connection (Horton 2013). This mosque was taken down in turn in the early eleventh century and replaced by a large mosque 16.20 × 9.40/10.20 m (using the 540 mm cubit, internal proportion 5:3), twice the size of the contemporary Shanga mosque, accommodating around 160 worshippers. The prayer hall had six internal columns, a deep mihrab that may have had carved decoration, and a plaster floor on a white sand base.

Other sites have produced some tentative evidence for earlier timber buildings below later mosques. Two of these are on the Comoros. At Old Sima, a major trading site of the ninth century, the earliest stone building below the present (ruined) mosque was dated to the eleventh century or earlier, and as it aligned with the later structure was thought to be a mosque. Below this were found "modest post holes" of unknown date (Wright 1992). At Domoni at the site of the Mkiri wa Shirazi, a site occupied from the eleventh century, a complex sequence of rebuilds were encountered, between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Below the earliest wall, a single large post hole was found of unknown date. How this related to a larger building is unknown as only a very small area was excavated, but this does point to the presence of an earlier timber building.

Early essays in mosque architecture have a number of features in common. In at least four examples (Shanga, Ras Mkumbuu, Sima, and Domoni), the stone mosques were preceded by timber structures, most likely mosques. The story at Shanga was very clear; these early mosques were small rectangular structures in varying proportions between 2:1 and 3:2. Such rectangular buildings are a natural way to construct in timber, and almost identical timber mosques are still constructed on the coast in the small fishing villages (Figure 10.4).

These same proportions were then assumed by the stone mosques, and were even made to look like timber buildings with wall pilasters and thatched roofs, and internal columns often made of timber. The stone mosques used *porites*, cut into neat square blocks, bonded with mud or mud and lime mortar, and finished with plaster faces. The prayer hall was raised on an internal platform of sand capped by a plaster floor and was probably entered from both the sides and south (where one entering would be facing the direction of Mecca). The decorative style of mihrabs is unknown – Shanga probably had one, with an external salient marking its position. However, most examples seem to have none (or nothing that left any archaeological trace) or were set within the thickness of the wall. Over time, the size of the mosque size increases, with frequent rebuild on the same site.

There are also features that reflect wider Indian Ocean influences. For example, there are normally four or six internal columns to support the roof; a feature echoing Southeast Asian practice (see Tajudeen, CHAPTER 38). Some structures

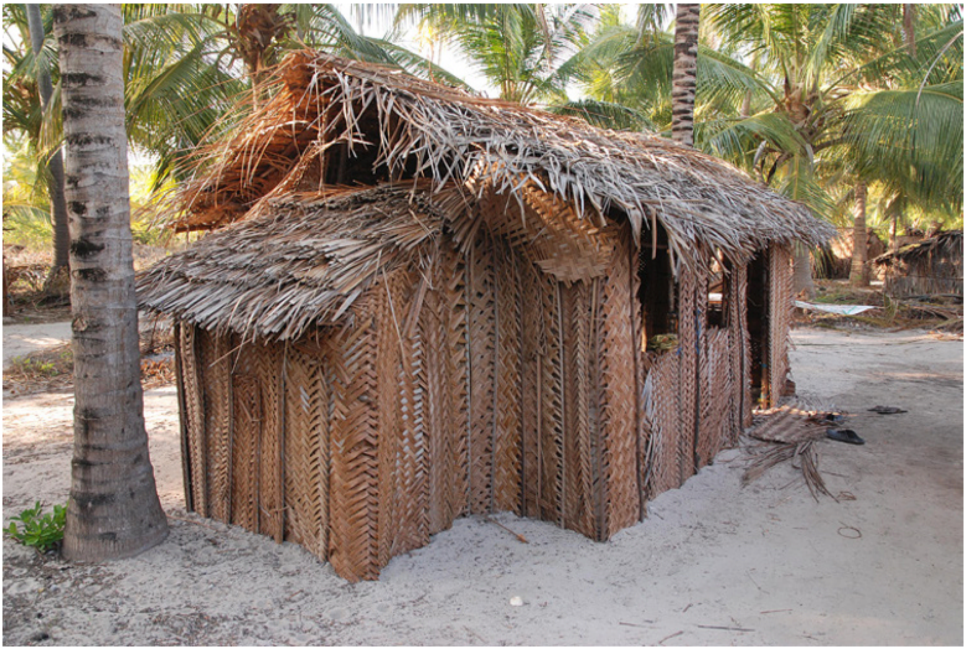

FIGURE 10.4 Timber mosque on Songo Mnara island, closely resembling ninth-century examples that have been excavated. Source: Mark Horton. Reproduced with permission.

seem to contain a southern anteroom (again reflecting early practice), while the washing areas lie to the side, either east or west depending on the location of the water supply. These southern rooms are reminiscent of subsidiary praying areas found in the mosques at Bhadreshvar (Shokoohy 1998: 25–33) and southern India (Shokoohy 2003: 16–17; Lambourn, CHAPTER 30). There is no evidence for minarets, again a feature of Indian and Southeast Asian mosques, although Shanga had a stair that led to the roof that might have served a similar function.

The orientation or qibla of East African mosques is a broad indication of date. The sequence from Shanga demonstrated how there was a generally eastwards realignment over time and this seems to be reflected on other datable sites. The correct direction is very close to due north, and the early mosques are up to 40 degrees too far west; by around 1100, the correct direction is known and is consistently employed. This shift demonstrates a growing knowledge of global topography as well as astronomical knowledge of direction finding (King 1999). Early world maps locate Qanbalu (Pemba), and the astronomical tables of Ibn Shatir (*c.* 1360) give a location 50° (long.) 3° south (lat.); a qibla direction of 328° 10’. The observed orientation of the mosque at Ras Mkumbuu was 345°, but Ibn Shatir’s figure is remarkably close to the late ninth-century mosques at Shanga (323–330°).

The “Shirazi” Towns

In the late tenth or early eleventh century, the fortunes of the East African towns changed again; some of the older settlements were refounded (e.g., Shanga, Manda, Kilwa), others were established from new (e.g., Mafia, Kizimkazi, Mtambwe). Trade routes appear to have changed, as did the imported ceramic assemblages. The older large jars from the interior of the Gulf were replaced by lead-glazed sgraffiato tableware from Iranian Makkran. The Chinese pottery comprised Qingbai-glazed wares, and Indian pottery was more frequent, as were Indo-Pacific glass beads from southern India and Sri Lanka. More significantly, this was the time that East Africa opened up links with Arabia, the Red Sea, and the Fatimid world; virtually all the known foreign coins found at this date are of Fatimid origin.

Persistent oral traditions in East Africa may refer to these changes. These tell of the “arrival” of seven brothers – or a father and his six sons – from the city of Shiraz in southern Iran, who founded seven towns between the Lamu archipelago and the Comoros. The Shirazi traditions are particularly strong on Zanzibar and Pemba, Mafia, Kilwa, and in the Comoros, and it seems that they can best be interpreted as a cultural idea rather than a literal “migration” (Horton and Middleton 2000: 52–69). The formation of this idea dates most probably to the period when Shiraz was at its most famous, under the Shiʿi Buyids (945–1055), and represents the control of these new or refounded settlements by a linked ruling dynasty. Remarkably, this can be reconstructed in some detail from the coins that they minted in silver and copper.

These coins, with Kufic inscriptions, develop out of the earlier ninth-century miniscule coins from the Lamu archipelago (with their connections to Sind) but now have a strong Iranian element including the use of Zoroastrian symbols, names such as Bahram, and religious epithets that have Shiʿi undertones (Figure 10.2). An important hoard of silver coins from Mtambwe Mkuu on Pemba provided a list of 10 minters associated with Fatimid gold coins, the latest dating to 1066 (Horton, Brown, and Oddy 1986; Horton forthcoming). Similar silver coins have also been found at Unguja Ukuu, Mafia, and Kilwa, while the more frequent copper coins have a wider distribution on Zanzibar, Mafia, and Kilwa. The names on the coins relate to local rulers, who seem to be interrelated, although attempts to correlate with names in local chronicles, such as the *History of Kilwa* have proved largely fruitless.

Around 1100 the East African mosque assumes a standard shape and dimension, which seems to be associated with these “Shirazi” towns. This standard mosque owes a lot to the early mosques described above, in terms of proportions and building materials. The prototype of this type of mosque is the Shanga Friday Mosque (Horton 1996) dating to around 1000, but it was on the coast of Tanzania and its islands that sees the clearest of adoption of the Shirazi-style mosque in the early twelfth century and it is not impossible that the basic idea moved down from the north as the form evolved at Shanga (and no doubt other sites), in the same way that the production of silver coins seems to have moved south but had a northern origin.

The characteristics of these mosques included a prayer hall that retains its rectangular form, with four, six, or nine columns (often in timber rather than stone) supporting a flat roof, with ceiling tiles using coral. The walls were still made from *porites* and there were opposing arched doorways on the side and in the south wall. The arches often had an apex nick at the top of the arch. There is no south room, as is found in the earlier timber and stone mosques. A particular defining feature is the use of side and corner pilasters, which probably extended as pillars above the roof to support a thatched roof over the stone ceiling still echoing the folk memory of the earlier timber mosques. The floor is often raised above the surrounding ground level, requiring steps to enter the mosque at each of the doorways. As the surrounding ground level increased in height through urban occupation, the need for these steps disappeared and the areas were used for side rooms, to enable the mosque floor area to expand. None of these mosques have minarets. The mihrabs are often elaborate internally and project out from the north wall in a very obvious fashion.

The clearest example of this type is the mosque at Kizimkazi (Figure 10.5), with its famous mihrab and inscription dating to 500 (1107) (Flury 1922; Horton forthcoming). Kizimkazi may well have been the legacy of a community that moved there from Unguja Ukuu, the major Zanzibar trade site only 15 km away. The original mosque was a *porites*-walled building with side and corner pilasters, opposed arched (and apex nick) side and southern doors, with a plaster floor raised on a platform of sand. Originally it may have had four columns, although there are now three centrally aligned columns that obscure the view of the mihrab, from an eighteenth-century reconstruction. The internal dimensions of the prayer hall are 8.6 × 5.9 m (16:11, 50.7 m^2), close to the other small mosques of this period, with a capacity of around 50.

The mihrab uses extensive panels and roundels of cut *porites* and inscriptions in a floriated and foliated plaited Kufic style. An exceptional feature is the floriated trefoil arch (a design reflected in small windows in the recess) that forms three elegant lobes. The front of the mihrab has engaged columns and the recess is fluted with repeating arcading.

The Kizimkazi mihrab stood alone, until the excavation of the central mosque at Tumbatu, which while dating to the fourteenth century had a rebuilt mihrab from an earlier structure (probably an unlocated "Shirazi" mosque somewhere in the town), which was found in fragments on the floor (Horton forthcoming). Like Kizimkazi, it too had a trefoil arch, Kufic inscriptions, engaged columns, arcading, and fluted apse. While the Tumbatu mihrab was a fine example, the workmanship of the Kufic was considerably inferior (Figure 10.6). It would appear to be a copy of the Kizimkazi original. Another

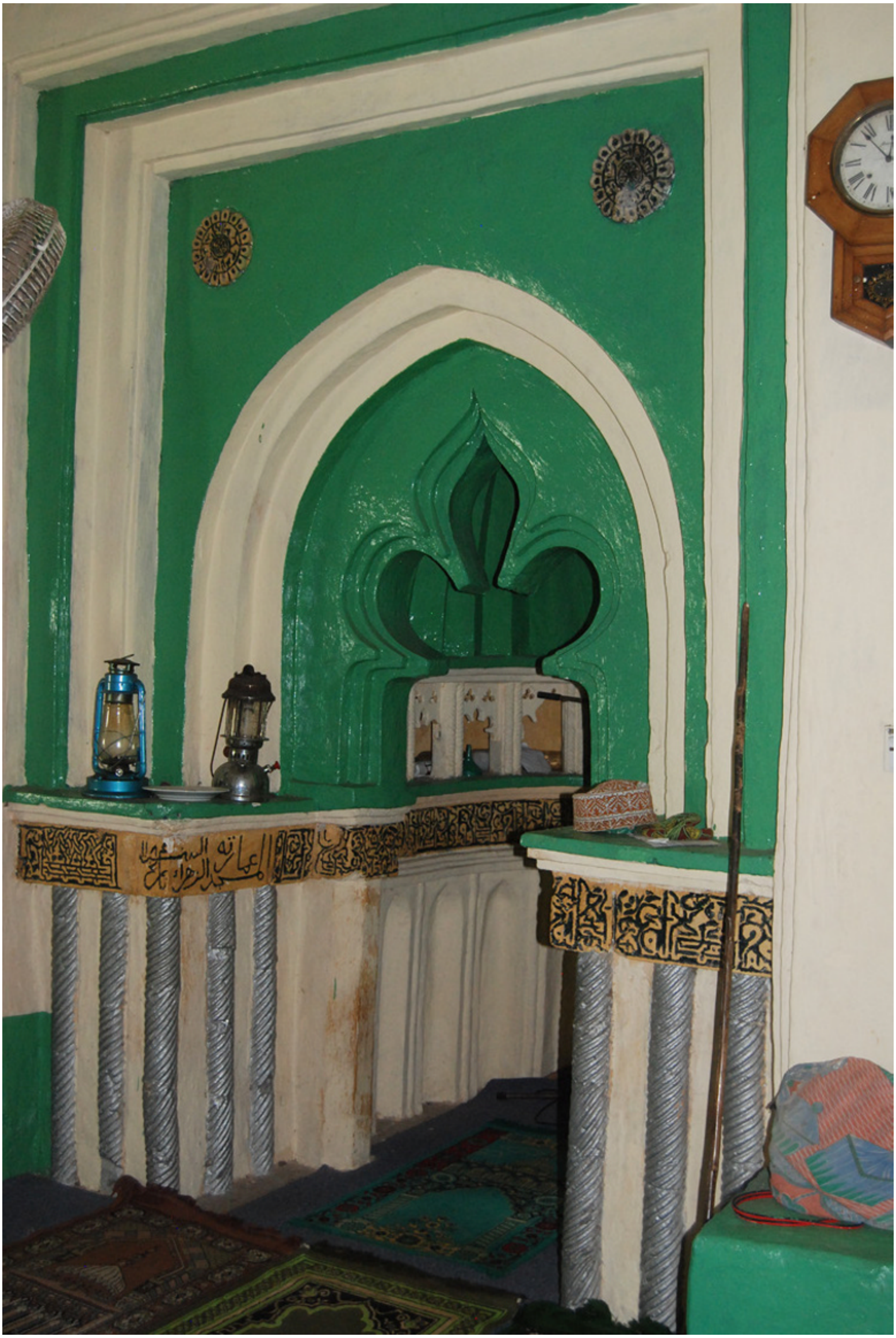

Figure 10.5 The mihrab at Kizimkazi, 1107. After its restoration, the coral was unfortunately covered in oil paint covering some of details of the carving and inscriptions. Source: Mark Horton. Reproduced with permission.

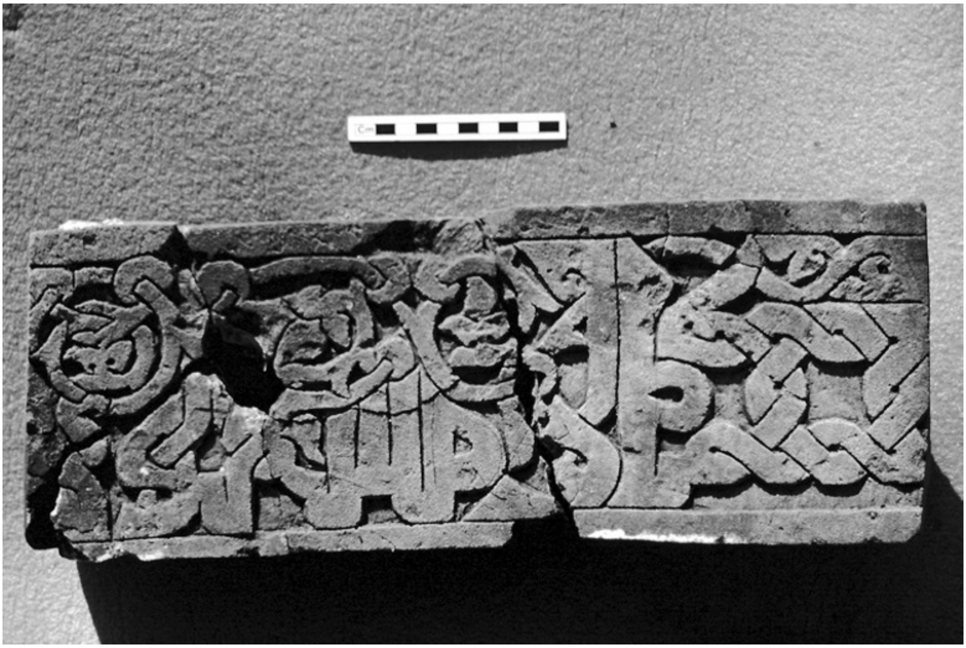

FIGURE 10.6 Kufic inscription from Tumbatu, mid-twelfth century. Source: Mark Horton. Reproduced with permission.

derivative, but without inscriptions, is the mihrab at Domoni (Anjouan), which has an early trefoil arch altered in a later period (Wright 1992) and decorative side panels.

The stylistic features of both Tumbatu and Kizimkazi are a little difficult to unravel. Close parallels to the Kizimkazi inscription have been suggested with the funerary inscriptions at Siraf (Lowick 1985; Whitehouse 1978), as well as inscriptions from the Bhadreshvar in Gujarat, one of which bears an al-Sirafi *nisba* or toponymic (Blair 1989; Shokoohy 1988). This particular type of floriated and foliated plaited Kufic, possibly associated with Siraf, may have spread along the trade routes, both east and west, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries; indeed it may have been a common feature of circulation around the Indian Ocean maritime networks (Flood 2009: 50–51). The mihrabs as a whole, with the trefoil arch, are more difficult to compare with other known mihrabs, and nothing is known from Siraf or the general region that is in anyway similar. Shokoohy (1988) also suggested parallels to North Africa for this style of Kufic, and it is perhaps interesting to compare the trefoil arches with those of the parapet finials at the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo (876–878) or the polylobed arches at the Great Mosque at Cordoba. Alternatively links with India might be possible, although the dated examples of mihrabs with trefoilate arches are later in date, among them a mihrab in the mosque of Ahmad Khan at Vijayanagara, dated 1439 (Wagoner 1999:

249–253). While there may be stylistic parallels elsewhere to these mihrabs, they are certainly products of East African workshops. The use of *porites* (which has to be worked shortly after its mining from the seabed) meant that the work had to be done locally, indicating a high degree of technical skill. There are some similarities with the near-contemporary silver coins with their Kufic inscriptions, suggesting a sophisticated level of local literacy in Arabic and epigraphy.

Only a few of these mosques had these very elaborate mihrabs, and it seems that simple structures were more common. This may well go back to the earlier and more primitive traditions of Islam found in the timber mosques and early stone mosques, such as at Shanga and Ras Mkumbuu, with a a central post or projecting salient. The simplest examples are set within the thickness of the wall, and the recess does not even project beyond the north wall. This may have been the case at Kaole and the Shanga Friday Mosque, but in both cases detailed evidence was removed by later rebuilds. One intact example from the twelfth century is in the side room of the Friday Mosque at Tumbatu, and an eleventh-century example in Sanje ya Kati, where only the ground plan survives (Pradines 2009). An unusual mosque at Chwaka (Pemba Island) found below the fifteenth-century Friday Mosque also has this feature. These simple mihrabs may derive from Ibadi practice (which continued to be employed in nineteenth-century Zanzibar), where the imam is prohibited from leading the prayers from the front of the shallow mihrab (Horton 2013).

The most imposing mosque built in this period is at Kilwa, probably the main center of Shirazi culture (Figure 10.7). It was constructed in the late eleventh century directly over an earlier, and slightly smaller mosque, with a floor area of 11.9 × 8.0 m (95 m^2 22:14.5) and three opposed side doors and two southern doors (Chittick 1974: 62), all originally arched. The roof was supported on nine 16-sided wooden columns (again reflecting the timber mosque prototype), and there were corner and side wall pilasters. Two small windows were located in the north wall. The simple mihrab is largely original, but its façade has been reconstructed.

This basic form of mosque became fairly universal over the next few centuries with a number of small modifications. The most significant was the abandonment of the side and corner pilasters (and presumably often the thatch roof that was supported on the pillars that rose from the wall tops). *Porites* was replaced by terrestrial coral rag for the main walls, and the *porites* reserved for the dressings of the door openings. Additional rooms were also created on the east and west sides that expanded the potential area of the prayer, and the intermediate walls turn into arcades rather than walls with doorways. As the mosques became larger, so the number of columns increased, but the overall proportions of the main prayer hall remained unchanged between 2:1 or 3:2. Particularly fine examples of these expanded mosque plans include the Tumbatu Friday Mosque and Ras Mkumbuu, both dating to the early thirteenth century.

After the twelfth century, the two traditions of simple and elaborate mihrabs tended to converge into the “classic mihrab” (Garlake 1966: 60). They were constructed of cut *porites* and consisted of a simple arch, with an apex nick, rising

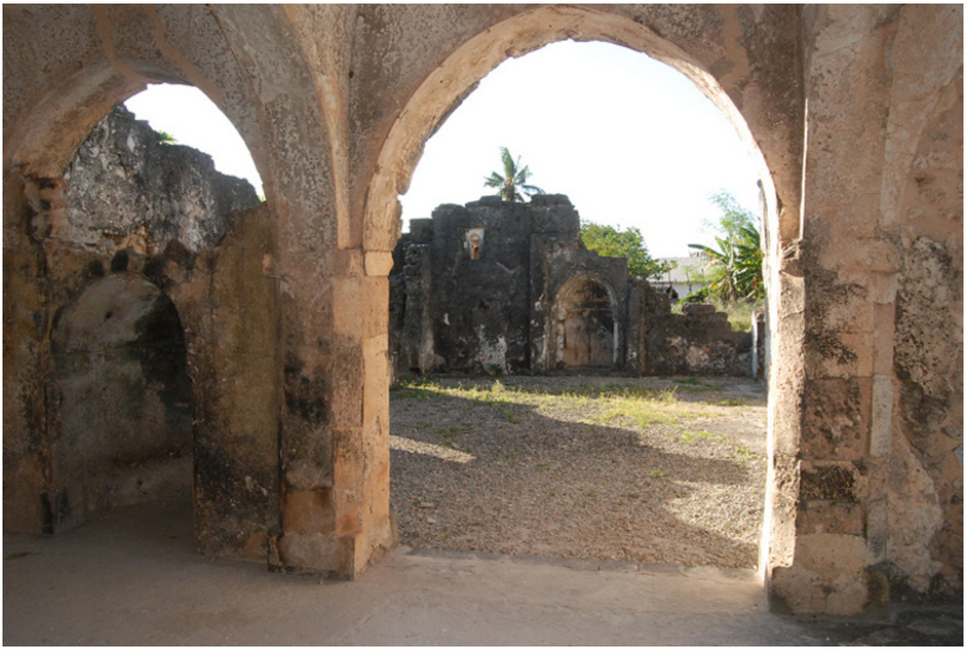

FIGURE 10.7 The main mosque at Kilwa, early twelfth century. Source: Mark Horton. Reproduced with permission.

from a capital. The semi-circular apse is well proportioned and plain, and projects a little from the wall, as a rectangular block. The arch is framed with a simple architrave and this may contain small niches for book storage. Over time, these mihrabs employ simple decoration including herringbone designs on the arch, architrave, and capital, and occasionally inserted Chinese ceramic bowls. A particularly fine and well-proportioned example of this type is the mihrab (Figure 10.8) in the thirteenth-century mosque at Ras Mkumbuu (Horton forthcoming).

Some mosques continued to employ Kufic inscriptions and other features found at Kizimkazi. The Shanga Friday Mosque (mid-twelfth century) has much plainer Kufic running along the capitals, and engaged columns as well as decorative panels. The mihrab at Mnarani (Garlake 1966: 148) has most of the elements including Kufic inscriptions but lacking the trefoil arch. The fluted apse and arcading is employed in two mosques at Kizimani Mafia and at fifteenth-century Songo Mnara. Trefoil arches were revived in the sixteenth century with early examples in the Lamu area such as at Manda, Ungwana, and Shaka (Garlake 1966: 64). It is possible to follow this style into the eighteenth century, with examples in the mosques in Lamu and Zanzibar – little different to the original that was 700 years older, suggesting perhaps that the model was well known and visited. During the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the trefoil arch becomes extremely mannerist, and barely recognizable from its medieval origins.

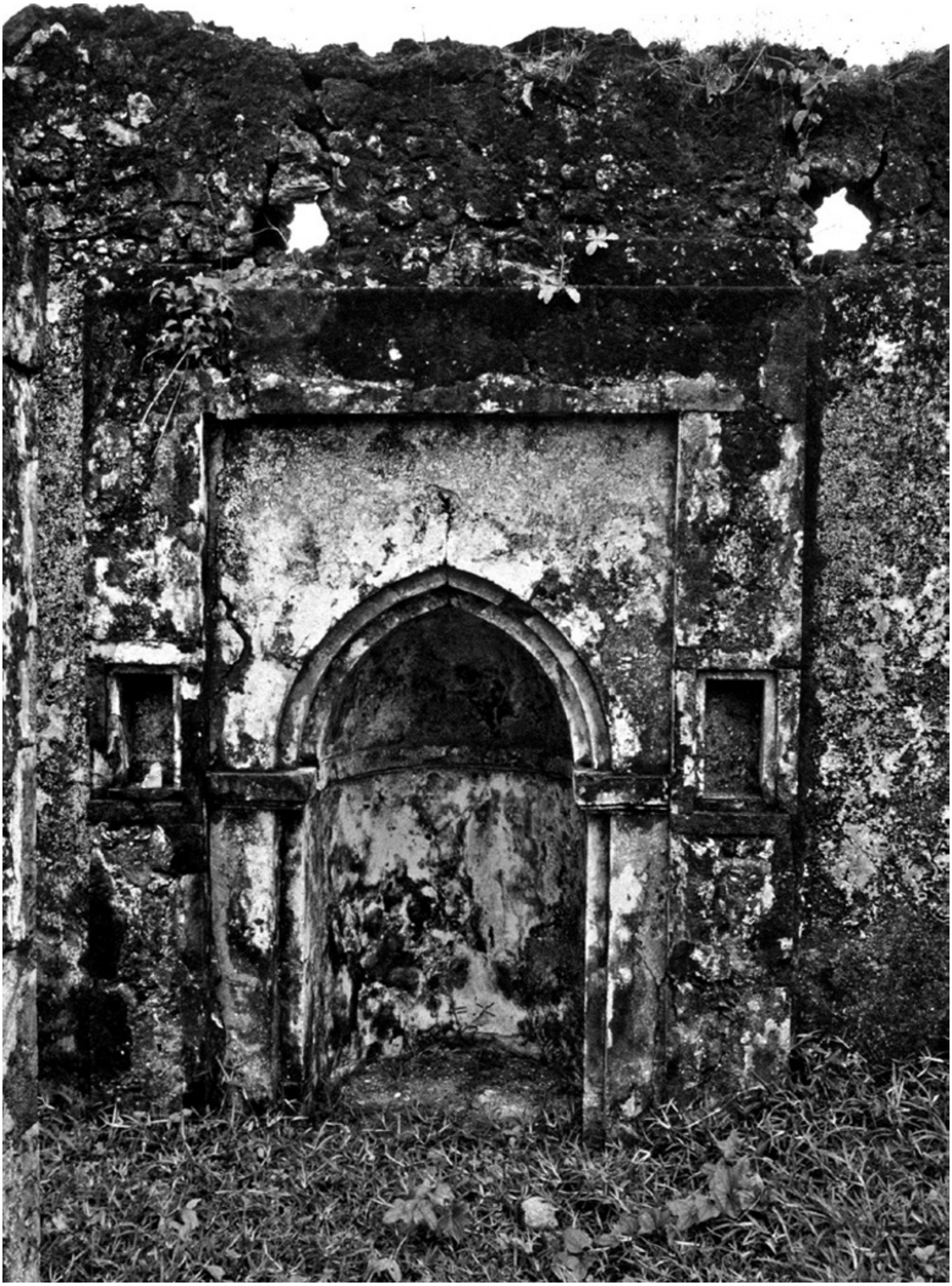

FIGURE 10.8 The “classic” mihrab at Ras Mkumbuu, Pemba Island. Source: Mark Horton. Reproduced with permission.

East Africa in the Global Islamic Economy

Underlying this architectural framework was a world of competing merchants, networks, and forms of Islam that left their influences to create an Islamic style that is distinctively East African and from its formation around this time remains largely unaltered until the present day. Understanding these shifting networks is therefore key to both the particular nature of the East African towns and the contribution that they have made to the wider Islamic world. East Africa was an important source of luxury items especially for decorative arts that included ivory, gold, and quartz crystal.

East Africa was a source of ivory from the first century (Casson 1989) but became important during the period of Abbasid trade, when al-Masʿudi devoted much of his narrative of the region to its description (Freeman-Grenville 1962: 14–17), explaining that it was used in the China trade, as India consumed all its own supply of ivory domestically. By the eleventh century East African ivory was reaching Cairo, and in *c.* 1047, Nasir-i Khusraw noted in the lamp market tusks from Zanzibar, many weighing over 200 maunds (Thackston 2001: 69) – which might translate into 500–750 kg, far in excess of the largest tusks recorded in the nineteenth century that rarely exceeded 90 kg, and most likely an exaggeration. East Africa ivory seems to have been valuable because of its size – with diameters exceeding 110 mm (the so-called Cutler rule, Cutler 1985) – its softness for carving, and its whitish-cream color. Indian ivory was smaller, harder, and had a pinkish hue. Many of the finest pieces of Fatimid ivory work may well have used East African ivory. The representation of the islands of Unguja and Kanbalu (Zanzibar and Pemba) in the Fatimid *Book of Curiosities* (Bodleian MS Arab c.90, fols 29b–30a) provides confirmation of a close Egyptian knowledge of East Africa at this time.

Nasir-i Khusraw also observed quartz or rock crystal for sale in Fatimid Cario, but was less clear about the exact source. He claimed that some came from the Maghrib but added that "they say that near the Red Sea, crystal even finer and more translucent than the Maghribi variety had been found" (Thackston 2001: 69). This may refer to a trade from East Africa, as al-Biruni has described the export of crystal from the islands of the Zanj to Basra in *c.* 1017 (Said 2007: 159–160). The Fatimid quartz crystal carving workshops probably employed this material in the early eleventh century. The archaeological evidence is helpful because exceptionally translucent crystal waste has been found on several East African sites in this period, suggesting the lumps were trimmed and partly worked before export; crystal beads were made from some of these waste chippings. The likely geological source is northern Madagascar, where there are still today lumps of exceptionally large pieces of pure crystal in the river valleys that drain to the coast on both the east and west coasts (Horton *et al.* 2017). Both crystal and chlorite schist or soapstone (another Madagascar product) was probably exported through Mahilaka (Radimilahy 1998), a major urban site dating from the eleventh century on the northwest coast.

The export of gold from East Africa seems to have been related to these other products. While ivory can clearly be obtained along the whole coast, it appears that southern Africa was an important source from the early ninth century onwards, and ivory chippings have been found in Iron Age sites in the Transvaal, such as Shroda, Pont Drift, and K2 along with glass beads and cowrie shells (Horton and Middleton 2000). Gold comes from the nearby Zimbabwe plateau and its exploitation probably dates from the tenth century, possibly using the same social networks that had been developed for the ivory trade. Al-Masʿudi makes only passing reference gold mining, but the *Authentic Tales of the Sea and its Wonders* noted in the early tenth century that "in the high parts of the Land of the Zanj there are gold mines. It is in sandy soil, like most deposits. Men dig for gold there, and excavated galleries like ants" (Freeman-Grenville 1981: 38), and by the early eleventh century, al-Biruni describes a well-established gold trade from the coast to the interior (Said 2007: 205). The working of gold for beads, foil, wire, and even objects such as the famous gold rhinoceros from Mapungubwe Hill was found in thirteenth-century burials (Oddy 1984), although the site of K2 nearby may have been an earlier center. The Shirazi towns may have acted as intermediaries in this gold trade from the early eleventh century. While very little gold has been found, there is a local type of gold coin, in the style of a Fatimid dinar, but only 81–91 percent pure. Three examples were found in the Mtambwe hoard, an example comes from Kisimani Mafia, and a hoard from Diego Suarez in Madagascar whose whereabouts is unknown (Horton forthcoming). With the abandonment of Mapungubwe, *c.* 1300, control of the gold trade shifted north to Great Zimbabwe, and was probably consolidated at Kilwa. Gold coins (one was dated 1320–1338) of al-Hasan ibn Sulaiman al-Mahdali, the Sultan of Kilwa in the early fourteenth century, have been found in the coastal town of Tumbatu (Horton forthcoming). The bulk of the gold was probably exported as gold dust, and used in the mints of Arabia and Cairo.

Other luxury items may have found their way into the Indian Ocean economy. One was copal, recorded by al-Biruni (Said 2007: 181–182) as "amber" but most likely a resinous gum that is either found in geological coral or can be tapped from *Hymenaea verrucosa*, forest trees found on the mainland. It was used as incense, and lumps are found both on coastal sites and from eleventh-century Sharma on the Yemen coast (Regert *et al.* 2008; Rougeulle 2004). Analysis of an incense burner from Unguja Ukuu, dating to the ninth century, has shown that this copal was the main ingredient used (Crowther *et al.* 2015). Timber was also significant; mangrove poles were used extensively in the Middle East for building, and higher quality teak and ebony were also recorded in the sources, used in building and ship construction. Many other items recorded in the nineteenth century, ranging from ambergris, civet musk, perfumes, skins, and horn have left little archaeological remains (Horton and Middleton 2000: 13).

It would appear that there was considerable complexity in the operations of the coastal towns as to whom they traded with as well as change over time. Imported pottery and glass beads hint at this, showing much variation between Arabia, the inner and outer Gulf, western and southern India, Sri Lanka, and East Asia. Thus, for example, the Pemba sites continue to trade with the Gulf in the thirteenth century, while sites on Zanzibar, Lamu, and Kilwa have switched to southern Arabia. Tumbatu, a small island off Zanzibar, imports exceptionally large quantities of Indian pottery in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Horton forthcoming). The pattern that seems to emerge is of particular towns or polities developing their own trade networks across the Indian Ocean world. While the inhabitants of the coastal towns were cultural brokers between that world and the African interior, they were also active in setting up and developing long-distance relationships supplying and receiving commodities from two very different worlds.

By being part of the Islamic world, the East African coastal towns had much in common with their most important trading partners. However, they did not simply adopt Islamic forms as slavish copies of Middle Eastern forms but often developed their own styles. Thus, for example, there are no courtyard mosques – a very common form in the Islamic world – instead mosques are in the form of rectangular halls with internal columns. Their mihrabs, such as at Kizimkazi, were also distinctive and unique and do not find any parallel in the Middle East. Minarets are very rare and are generally found after the sixteenth century (Sassoon 1982). The designs on cut *porites* coral used on mosque decoration show a strong indigenous character, which can be seen in more recent ethnographic material such as woodcarving and cloth.

The globalization process is not only about trade but also about the shared culture circulating across global spaces. One of these globalizing forces was Islam, which created a relatively uniform set of rules and practices. By being part of the Islamic world, the East African towns developed commonalities with their most important trading partners while retaining their distinctive and essentially African character.

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11

Textiles and Identity

Jochen Sokoly

Textiles and clothing are perhaps the most significant markers of human existence. Large-scale production of fabrics can be traced back to Neolithic times when human society transformed from a nomadic to a settled one with ever complicated systems of hierarchy – governmental and religious as well as economic. Textiles have naturally been an integral part of these systems, both as objects of monetary value but also as subjects of symbolic meaning. It is the latter aspect that is the subject of this chapter.

This chapter focuses on a group of inscribed textiles from Egypt and the central Islamic lands commonly known as *tiraz* textiles that have largely, but not exclusively, survived in Islamic burials in Egypt. The great majority of these textiles date from the early/mid-ninth up to the eleventh centuries and therefore provide one of the largest bodies of evidence relating to the period in which the Abbasid caliphate (750–1258) grew, declined, and was finally broken up by its rivals.

The first part of this chapter will explore briefly how the idea of an Abbasid hegemony was manifested through the medium of inscribed textiles with their documentary and protocolary caliphal content, and how the Abbasids established a significant relationship between the empire's center and its provincial periphery through the administration of production, as well as the epigraphic form and content, and function of textiles as robes of honor (*khilaʿ*).

The second part will look at the legacy of this model at a time when the Abbasid caliphate was in steep decline after the establishment of rival caliphates in Egypt and Spain around the mid-tenth century (see Anderson and Pruitt, CHAPTER 9). It is particularly after the conquest of Egypt by the Fatimids in 969 that we can see caliphal textiles taking on decisively different nuances to those of their Abbasid rivals. While the aesthetics and design of inscriptions continue at first Egyptian pre-conquest traditions, the content of inscriptions reflects the Fatimid claim to

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the caliphate and their aims to conquer the holy sites of Mecca and Medina. The concept of the robe of honor *khilʿa* also takes on a religious notion that is connected to the idea that the Fatimid caliph was a descendant of the Prophet's family, and as imam a source of divine *baraka* (blessing or benediction).

Inscribed Textiles as Symbols of Caliphal Hegemony: The Abbasids

Amongst the tens of thousands of textile fragments that have survived from the early Islamic Mediterranean, West and Central Asia, about 1900 stand out because they were inscribed with legible and documentary text (Figure 11.1). These inscriptions, called *tiraz*, contain religious, dynastic, administrative, and historical content referring to an official commission by an Islamic ruler or one of his representatives. The institution of the *tiraz* goes back to the Umayyad empire where it was part of the system of government controlled requisitions such as the minting of coins (*sikka*) and the production of papyri and textiles (Stillman and Stillman 2003: 124–125). The historian Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Baihaqi (still living during the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir's reign, 908–932) describes in an anecdote, a conversation between Harun al-Rashid (786–809) and his former

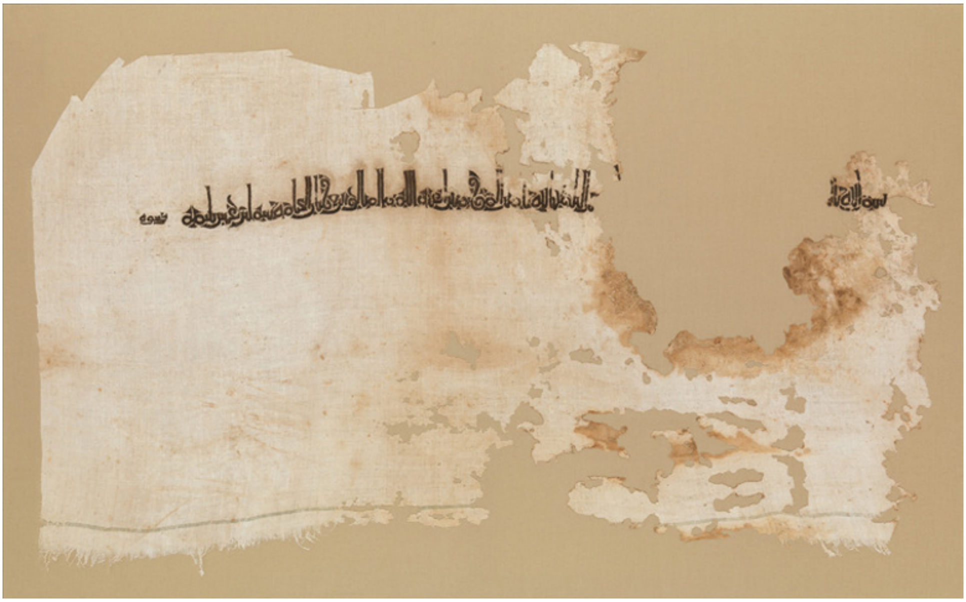

Figure 11.1 *Tiraz* textile fragment, dated 939–940, Egypt, linen plain weave, silk embroidered, height 41.9 × width 74.9 cm. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of George D. Pratt, 1929, acc. no. 29.179.13.

teacher and confidant, the philologist and Qurʾan reader al-Kisaʾi (lived *c.* 737–805), how the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 685–705) introduced Arabic as the official language for the *tiraz* inscriptions on coins, papyri, and textiles (Baihaqi 1902: 498–503; Karabacek 1909: 7–15). One day Harun, holding a dirham in his hand, asked al-Kisaʾi who had introduced the text on the coin. Al-Kisaʾi told him that ʿAbd al-Malik had once seen the Greek *protocollon* on an Egyptian papyrus scroll from a state manufacture and when its content was translated to him he was angry about the fact that the official inscription did not represent Islam properly. He also thought it problematic that such inscriptions were applied to all other products of state manufacture. ʿAbd al-Malik therefore ordered his brother, the governor of Egypt ʿAbd al-ʿAziz ibn Marwan to change the Greek *protocollon* on all objects produced for the state, such as textiles, papyrus, and curtains, to an Arabic *tiraz* containing *sura al-ikhlas* (Qurʾan 112: Sincerity) and parts of the *shahada* in Qurʾan 3: 18.

One of the very few surviving textiles from the Umayyad realm is the so-called Marwan *tiraz*, three fragments comprising a silk compound-woven patterned base fabric with an embroidered inscription in Arabic. The inscription consists of a protocolary formula mentioning the name of Marwan, either the caliph Marwan I (r. 684–685) or Marwan II (r. 744–750), as well as remnants of administrative content possibly relating to the textile's manufacture and its place of manufacture in Ifriqiyya (present-day Tunisia) (Evans and Ratliff 2012: 228–241, no. 173 a–c). Given the story discussed above, an attribution of the textile to Marwan II is more plausible.

While we know relatively little about the institution of the *tiraz* and its geographical spread under the Umayyads, our understanding of its history under the Abbasids is much better documented, both through literary sources and the body of extant textiles. Its administration and production were internationalized to such a degree that almost all important provincial government centers in Egypt, Khurasan, and Yemen, as well as the dynastic center in Baghdad, produced textiles which were inscribed with relatively uniform text, albeit comprising epigraphic variations, materials, and production techniques that were particular to each region. We know this from the large geographical variety which extant *tiraz* found in Egypt represent, such as silk-embroidered Khurasani *mulham* (a mix of cotton and silk), embroidered cotton *ikat*s from Yemen, and silk-embroidered or tapestry-woven linen or wool tapestry from Egypt itself. The texts inscribed allow us to assign precise attributions to a caliph's reign and sometimes offer a particular date and location as well as administrative details, such as the name of a vizier, financial director, or governor. Central to the functions and meanings of *tiraz* inscriptions on textiles was the fact that inscriptions containing a caliph's name and protocol were a caliphal prerogative, highly guarded and defended. In his *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) (Ibn Khaldun 1862: 66; Serjeant 1972: 7–8) states that "It is an emblem of dignity reserved for the sovereign, for those whom he wishes to honor by authorizing them to make use of it, and for those whom he invests with one of the responsible posts of government."

Texts and artifacts illustrate the importance of placing the caliph's name in official inscriptions as a political prerogative under the Abbasids. Struggles for regional independence within the Abbasid family resulted on several occasions in the change of control over *tiraz* manufacture, events reflected in surviving *tiraz* inscriptions. Al-Azraqi (Wüstenfeld 1858: 162, 166) tells us that the sons of Harun al-Rashid competed over the succession to their father's empire. Harun al-Rashid had divided his empire between his sons al-Amin, al-Maʾmun, and Qasim al-Muʾtamin, based on a contract in which Amin accepted Maʾmun as governor of Khurasan. Al-Maʾmun agreed in his turn to his share in Khurasan and that of his brothers, and that he would not break the contract. Harun al-Rashid proclaimed his successors during the hajj of the year 802 by posting a letter on the Kaʿba in which he had laid down that Amin should be his first successor, Maʾmun his second and Qasim al-Muʾtamin his third (Balkhi and Huart 1899: 106–109).

After Harun's death, however, Amin proclaimed his son Musa heir-apparent in disregard of Harun's stipulation, awarded him Iraq and at the same time forbade the supplication in the name of Maʾmun, introducing Musa's instead. He also declared coins minted in the name of Maʾmun invalid. Furthermore, Amin sent one of his adherents, ʿAli ibn ʿIsa ibn Mahan, to lead an army against Maʾmun in order to have him arrested and brought to Baghdad alive. Maʾmun responded with three measures: he stopped sending the *kharaj* (land tax), assumed the title *amir al-muʾminin* (Commander of the Believers), and ceased to include Amin's name in *tiraz* and coin inscriptions. Moreover, it is related that Maʾmun made the Shiʿi imam Abu al-Hasan ibn Musa ibn Jaʿfar ʿAli al-Rida his own heir-apparent and had his and al-Rida's name inscribed on coinage and *tiraz* textiles (Baihaqi 1862: 161).

Tiraz textiles also featured in later power struggles. In 875, the caliph al-Muʿtamid, a son of al-Mutawakkil (r. 870–892) arranged his succession by appointing his son Jaʿfar al-Mufawwad as his first successor and viceroy of the West and his brother al-Muwaffaq as viceroy of the East. The historian Ibn al-Athir describes the struggles between al-Muwaffaq, the real force behind the throne of the Abbasid caliph al-Muʿtamid (869–893), and the Turkic governor of Egypt, Ahmad ibn Tulun. After al-Muwaffaq had hindered a plot by Ibn Tulun to free the caliph of al-Muwaffaq's control, Ibn Tulun took his revenge by stopping the mentioning of al-Muwaffaq's name in the *khutba* (Friday sermon) and *tiraz* inscriptions, an act which al-Muʿtamid disapproved of (Ibn al-Athir 1873: 143, 161–162; translated by Serjeant 1972: 19). The fact that al-Muʿtamid disapproved of Ibn Tulun's action underlines the significance of the control over *tiraz* inscriptions as a caliphal prerogative and not one exercised by a governor. In 892 the caliph al-Muʿtamid himself appointed his son al-Muʿtadid biʾllah Abu al-ʿAbbas Ahmad his heir-apparent, and consequently al-Muwaffaq's name was erased from the *khutba*, coinage, and *tiraz*.

Inscriptional evidence in *tiraz* textiles paints a vivid picture of the relationship between the Abbasid dynastic center in Iraq and the provincial periphery.

However, the importance of the control over *tiraz* textile production and the international composition of the materials found in Egypt mean that the "periphery" was not peripheral at all. It was of prime importance for the existence of Abbasid hegemony. Once control over the provinces was gone, so was the flow of taxes, materials, and commodities and with it the fiscal power of the caliphate that ultimately resulted in the loss of control over the Turkic slave armies. From the mid-tenth century the end of the caliphate and its summit was presaged by its fragmentation.

Why textiles were so fundamentally important to the Abbasids as an expression of their power is related in the *Kitab al-hadaya wa al-tuhaf* (Book of Gifts and Rarities), which describes the visit of a Byzantine embassy to the court of the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir (Qaddumi 1996: 148–155). Owing to the importance of the visit of this embassy, al-Muqtadir's vizier Abu al-Hasan ibn al-Furat ordered that the palaces should be hung with draperies, no doubt to impress the foreign envoy. According to the text 38 000 draperies were taken out of the *khizanat al-farsh* (Treasury of Furnishings), most of which were heavily embroidered in gold, with depictions of animals. The textiles came from across the Islamic world, as well as China. A large number of embroidered plain weave linen hangings (*dabiqi*) were of Egyptian origin, probably made in Dabiq in the Nile Delta. Very significantly the text also describes that 8000 items were inscribed with the commissioner's order, names of past caliphs, and other names. It may be the only description of Abbasid ceremonial stating explicitly the content of *tiraz* inscriptions.

The commission, manufacture, and delivery of the *kiswa*, the cloth covering dispatched annually to the Kaʿba in Mecca from Egypt, was perhaps the most significant symbol of caliphal status quo. The Mamluk historian al-Maqrizi (d. 1442) records the content of several early Abbasid *kiswas*, surely referring to items contained in the Fatimid treasury (Sokoly 2002: cat. nos. 12, 13, 16, 17, 23). These not only contained religious text but also important protocols of commission similar to those on surviving *tiraz* textiles. Since the Kaʿba was the most important Islamic religious monument, the patronage of the manufacture of the *kiswa* was a prerogative of the caliphate, or in later times of those in possession of the guardianship of the Holy Places and claiming caliphal status, such as the Fatimids and later the Mamluk and Ottoman sultans. It was an outward symbol of the custodianship over Mecca, first exercised by the Prophet Muhammad.

Displaying textiles from caliphal treasuries was surely a powerful public statement. Giving them to chosen individuals, however, was a matter of intimacy, providing a material bond between ruler and subject, with a lasting effect. If the subject was a courtier he became part of the intimate circle around the caliph; if he was a governor in a far away provincial capital, a robe of honor was a symbol of allegiance to the Abbasid caliph. In both cases the subject partook in the caliphal persona. It was an honor to receive such a textile or garment. A robe of honor was called *khilʿa* (plural *khilaʿ*). The meaning of the verbal root *khalaʿa* implies the

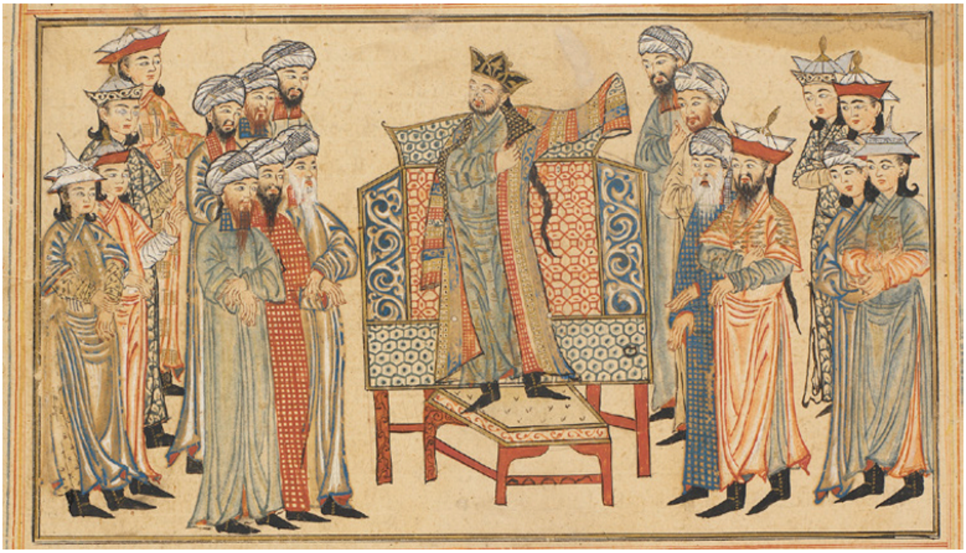

FIGURE 11.2 Mahmud ibn Sebuktegin donning a robe of honor sent by the Abbasid caliph al-Qadir (947–1031) in the year 1000, illustration from the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles) of Rashid al-Din, *c.* 1306 or *c.* 1314/15. Source: University of Edinburgh Library, Or. MS 20, f.121r. Reproduced with permission.

taking off of one's robes and in a further sense means the bestowing of these robes (*khalaʿa ʿalayhi khilʿa*) (Lane and Lane-Poole 1863: 1, 789). It appears that during the early Islamic period two customs of bestowal existed: one informal, the other formal. The informal bestowal of robes by the caliph consisted of the presentation of his personal used clothing to chosen individuals of the caliphal circle. The formal bestowal of clothing was practiced in official investitures of army or government officials upon their appointment and to a large extent in the annual distribution of clothing to the employees of the court (Figure 11.2).

A symbolically important precedent for the informal presentation of robes is recorded in Ibn al-Athir's collection of hadith, in which the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have taken off his *burda* (robe), handing it to the poet Kaʿb ibn Zuhayr upon hearing one of his poems (Ibn al-Athir 1886: 133–134). A later tradition tells us of the poet al-Busiri (d. 1294), who was cured of a paralytic stroke by the Prophet Muhammad throwing his mantle over his shoulders in a dream, while composing a poem, later also known as the *burda*. The poem, like the original relic, was believed to transmit healing powers and is still today recited at burials, in order to extend *baraka* to the deceased (Basset 1960: 1314–1315).

Worn clothes were also presented informally under the Umayyads. Several instances of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid II (r. 742–744) taking off his clothes and presenting them to his favorite poets are attested. On the occasion of a performance of the poet Hakam al-Wadi, al-Walid presented him first with money and then had his clothes sent to him (Hamilton 1988: 123). On another occasion, the young poet Hammad al-Rawiyah was given the two garments al-Walid was wearing (Hamilton 1988: 113). At another time, al-Walid was so enchanted by a song of the poet Ibn ʿA'ishah that he kissed him on his head, stripped naked, and presented the poet with his clothes (Hamilton 1988: 119).

The Abbasids continued the practice. Yedida and Norman Stillman (Stillman 1986: 6; Stillman and Stillman 2003: 42–43, 124–128) have suggested that the ritual of conferring *khilaʿ* on dignitaries and court employees and their families only became properly institutionalized under the Abbasids, a process that went hand in hand with the large-scale development of the *tiraz* institution, both in administration and production.[1] The practice of bestowing robes of honor was later also carried on under the Fatimids and Mamluks.

Al-Jahshiyari reports an incident in which the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid invested his vizier Jaʿfar ibn Yahya ibn Khalid ibn Barmak (in office 793–803) with administrative posts and rewards, such as the post-office (*barid*) and the *tiraz* of all the administrative units (*kura*) and afterwards embraced him with his own robe, possibly as a sign of affection (Jahshiyari *et al.* 1938: 204). Harun al-Rashid's physician, Bakhtishuʿ ibn Jibra'il received *khilaʿ* as part of a salary paid by the caliph privately (*rasm al-khassa*), as listed in Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa's (d. 1269/1270) dictionary of physicians. These are often described as *tirazi* (Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa 1884: 136). The tenth-century author Hilal al-Sabiʾ describes the investiture of the Buyid ruler ʿAdud al-Dawla with such a robe by the Abbasid caliph; among ʿAdud al-Dawla's various presentation items was a seat of honor with cushions inscribed with the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Mutiʿ li-ʾllah (Sabiʾ 1964: 93–99; 1977: 75–78). Robes of honor for commanders of the army (*umaraʾ al-juyush*), a vizier (*al-wazir*), and those distributed on a regional level (*al-wilayat*) were graded according to office and rank. Army generals (*ashab al-juyush*), for example, received the most elaborate vestments, a plain black turban, two black garments, one with a hoop and one without, a red gilded or embroidered *susi* (from Susa) cloth and a loose and sleeveless *dabiqi* (a plain linen) garment with a frontal opening. In addition, a sword, two quivers, a standard, and horses were presented. Standards, pivotal components of vestments, were of white silk and inscribed in ink. In one instance Hilal al-Sabiʾ lists a caliphal protocol mentioning the name of the caliph al-Qa'im bi-amr'ullah (1030–1075).

Inscribed Textiles as Caliphal Relics: The Fatimids

In 969, the Fatimid al-Muʿizz (r. 953–975), rival to his Abbasid contemporary al-Mutiʿ li-ʾllah, took possession of Egypt. Henceforth a new coinage was minted, the *khutba* was changed, and the content of textile inscriptions altered. The autobiography of al-Muʿizz's private secretary Abu ʿAli al-Mansur al-ʿAzizi al-Jawdhari relates an anecdote perhaps from the pre-conquest Fatimid court in Ifriqiya that illustrates how much the right wording of protocols was a matter of high concern to the caliph himself. In one incident al-Mansur, al-Muʿizz's father, personally commanded the formula "of what was made under the supervision of Jawdhar, Slave of the Commander of the Faithful in Mahdiyya" to be inscribed on prayer mats, despite the protest of Jawdhar, who thought his place in the inscription was too grand (Jawdhari *et al.* 1954: 88; Jawdhari and Canard 1958: 129–130).

Examples of extant Fatimid textile *tiraz* inscriptions clearly show that their content delivered important political messages. The Fatimids asserted their claim to the leadership of the whole Muslim community by stressing their ancestral right to rule whenever public mention of the Fatimid caliphs was made. As Ismaʿili's, who claimed descent from the sixth Shiʿi imam Jaʿfar al-Sadiq's (d. 765) son Ismaʿil, the Fatimids traced their lineage back to Fatima, a daughter of the Prophet Muhammad and wife of his cousin ʿAli, whom, according to Shiʿi belief, the Prophet had designated as his successor. They challenged Abbasid doctrine which saw the *sunna*, the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, as the law where the rightful succession was laid down. While in Sunni Islam the caliphs were exercising divine right by delegation, Shiʿi doctrine regarded the caliphs descending from the Prophet's family as divinely inspired in their function as imam. As imam, that is a divinely guided, sinless, and infallible leader, the Fatimid caliph shared in hidden divine knowledge and had a perfect understanding of the exoteric (outward) and esoteric (inward) aspects of the Qurʾan. Through their lineage the Fatimid imams partook physically in the nature of the Prophet Muhammad.

The first Friday sermon given in the name of the Fatimid caliph al-Muʿizz at the mosque of ʿAmr at Fustat on 20 July 969 excluded the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Mutiʿ li-ʾllah and reserved particular blessings for al-Muʿizz's ancestors: "God, bless our servant and friend, the fruit of prophecy, the scion of the rightly-guiding and rightly-guided (*mahdiyya*) clan, the servant of God, the Imam Abu Tamim al-Muʿizz li-Din Allah, the Commander of the Faithful, just as you blessed his fathers, the pure ones, and his ancestors, the rightly guided Imams" (Halm 1996: 414).

The caliph's ancestral link marked so prominently here was also stressed in textile, monument, and coin inscriptions. Common phrases shared between the Fatimid *khutba* and inscriptions on key monuments and textiles referred to the caliph's pure fathers and ancestors. Furthermore, phrases of Shiʿi signification, such as blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad's family, the mentioning of ʿAli, the "pure imams" (*al-aʾimma al-zahirin*), and the ruling caliph as a "Friend (or Companion) of God" (*waliu Allah*) were introduced into the inscriptions in both pre- and post-conquest *tiraz* textile inscriptions (Sokoly 2002: cat. nos. 1138, 1149). This conforms with the foundation inscription of the first Fatimid mosque in Egypt, al-Azhar, finished in 970–971 on the orders of al-Muʿizz's general and conqueror of Egypt, Jawhar al-Siqili, marking publicly the completion of the first large congregational mosque built in Egypt since the time of the rebellious Abbasid governor Ibn Tulun (d. 884). In post-conquest inscriptions, the father of the ruling caliph was sometimes also blessed in addition to his son (Sokoly 2002: cat. nos. 1399, 1416, 1417, 1564, 1582, 1627, 1648).

As a caliphal prerogative, the Fatimids exercised the ritual of presenting *khilaʿ*, the bestowal of garments from the caliphal treasury. In doing so they followed Abbasid practice. A number of descriptions of these annual investitures have survived. That the giving of personal items of clothing by the caliph himself sometimes was symbolic of transferring caliphal benediction is known from personal anecdotes. Here Fatimid practice differed from Abbasid precedent, where there seems to have been no evidence of such symbolism. Significant here is an anecdote between the Fatimid caliph al-Muʿizz and his private secretary Jawdhar which tells us how Al-Muʿizz presented Jawdhar a pair of slippers worn by his father al-Mansur in order to bestow benediction on him (Bloom 1985: 37, n.112; Jawdhari *et al.* 1954: 112–113; Jawdhari and Canard 1958: 169): "We know that you like wearing slippers, so we have sent to you two slippers of silk that were used by al-Mansur and then we too have used them whenever we needed them, so use them knowing that from God is the *baraka* and blessing." It is significant that al-Muʿizz explicitly stated that al-Mansur and he himself had worn those slippers before passing them on to Jawdhar. Because they had been worn by two imams they carried *baraka*. In presenting these slippers, Al-Muʿizz passed his *baraka* on to Jawdhar and in doing so honored him.

If a Fatimid caliph's own used clothes could transmit caliphal *baraka*, it could be argued that textiles inscribed with his name would also have carried caliphal *baraka*. The association with the caliph, symbolized by the inscriptions, manifested the sacral nature of the caliphal benefactor. Textiles played an important part in the rituals symbolizing and expressing a caliph's sacral nature. The sacred world dressed differently from the profane. While the Abbasid caliphs and their entourage wore black, a custom introduced by the caliph al-Mansur (r. 754–775) (Levy 1935: 329, 337); the Fatimids generally wore white in order to set themselves apart from their Abbasid rivals. These costumes formulated visually the identity of the dynasty and were intended to underline its elevated position. Because of their ancestral link with the Prophet Muhammad himself, the Fatimids saw themselves as possessors of divine knowledge. Consequently, their followers believed that they could transfer some of this divine inspiration in the form of *baraka*. Even proximity to the Fatimid caliph or seeing him could transfer caliphal *baraka* onto the believer (Sanders 1994: 28). Although the physical presence of the caliph was important for the emanation of his sacredness, the caliphal name could also transmit benediction in its own right, for example, whenever it was pronounced or written. Furthermore, materials that had been in physical contact with the caliph carried *baraka* as well. For example, food distributed by the Fatimid caliph or his palace on the occasion of large festivities was regarded as a source of *baraka* (Sanders 1994: 28–29, 76). Relating to the appointment of the Fatimid vizier al-Maʾmun ibn Bataʾihi in 1121–1122, the historian Maqrizi reports that al-Maʾmun kissed his letter of appointment received from the caliph

(Maqrizi 1853: 441, line 6). Likewise, Maqrizi reported that a *qadi* (judge) kissed the document received from the caliph which announced that he should take part in the procession of the *ʿid al-fitr* (Maqrizi 1853: 454, lines 20–23). Kissing these documents was surely a sign of great respect but could also be interpreted as a way to create a physical link to the caliphal sender. In an illustration in the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles) commissioned by the Mongol Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din in the fourteenth century (Figure 11.3) a follower of the Prophet Joshua is shown rubbing the sash of Joshua's turban against his cheek as a sign of reverence thereby creating a physical link to a sacred individual.

This suggests that besides expressing and symbolizing the sacral nature of its wearer, dress could itself become a source of sacred force. The mantle (*burda*) of the Prophet Muhammad kept in the Treasury of the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul has for centuries been regarded as a source of benediction. Touching it or drinking the residue water of its annual cleansing was thought to transmit its divinely bestowed forces, protecting the living against illness and the dead from torment (Atasoy 1986: 18; Baker 1991: 25; Flood 2014: 471–473).

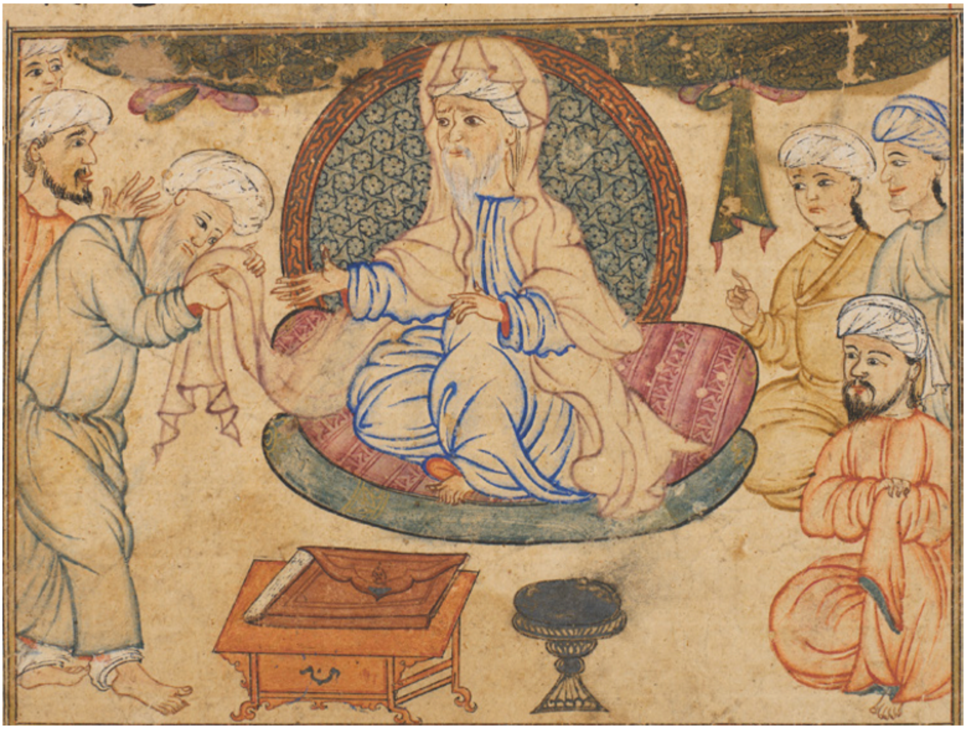

FIGURE 11.3 Joshua ordering the property taken at Jericho to be destroyed. Illustration from the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles) of Rashid al-Din, *c.* 1306 or *c.* 1314/15. Source: University of Edinburgh Library, Or. MS 20, f.10v. Reproduced with permission.

The Fatimid caliphs added a new dimension to the *khilʿa* ritual by presenting their own used clothes as shrouds and burial outfits for chosen subjects. Therefore such garments were not only a source of benediction for the living but also for the dead. One anecdote describes how al-Muʿizz's secretary Jawdhar sent the caliph a letter asking him for one of his own garments in order to be used as his own shroud, because of the blessing attached to such caliphal garments: "He [Jawdhar] sent a note to Our Master to ask him for one of his proper garments to serve him as a shroud when he should die, because of the blessing attached to it. After the caliph had read this note, he felt honoured and sent him numerous garments." In return al-Muʿizz sent very elaborate outfits of the four caliphs under whom Jawdhar had served. (Bloom 1985: 32, 37, n.112; Jawdhari *et al.* 1954: 138, no. 81; Jawdhari and Canard 1958: 211–212, no. 81). These consisted of various expensive materials including cloth from Merv in Khurasan. Included was a message for Jawdhar alluding to the time after his death: "Receive all of this with the blessing which is contained therein. Conserve these garments until the time of which you spoke [i.e., his death], after which God will have prolonged your life so that you will join us in the pilgrimage to the sacred house of God (Mecca) and the visit to the grave of our ancestor Muhammad (at Medina), so that this will be a joy to your eyes by the grace of God to his friends, God willing" (Bloom 1985: 32, 37, no. 112; Jawdhari *et al.* 1954: 138, no. 81; Jawdhari and Canard 1958: 211–212, no. 81).

A similar anecdote shows how exaggerated and overwhelming Fatimid benevolence could be. According to al-Maqrizi the caliph al-ʿAziz provided "50" funerary shrouds and other funerary paraphernalia for the burial of his vizier Yaʿqub ibn Killis, 30 of which were woven with gold, various embalming substances (*hanut*), and commissioned his chief *qadi* Muhammad bin al-Nuʿman to wash the deceased. Al-ʿAziz himself led the funeral procession and read the prayer of the dead (Maqrizi 1853: 7; Wüstenfeld 1881: 150–151).

Another instance of a caliph providing a funerary outfit for a public personage is documented for the period of the caliph al-Hakim (r. 996–1021). This one, however, lacks a personal facet. The twelfth-century historian Jamal al-Din describes an incident of prime political and religious importance to the status quo of al-Hakim, whose alleged personal excesses are often cited (Wüstenfeld 1881: 204). In 1018, a man by the name of Hasan b. Haydara al-Fargani al-Akhram declared that God had descended upon al-Hakim and preached openly against the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Hakim invested al-Akhram with precious garments and eight days later allowed him to take part in the caliphal procession of the second of Ramadan. Public opinion must have severely disapproved of al-Akhram, as he was assassinated by a spectator during the procession. It is significant that the text mentions explicitly that al-Akhram was wrapped in a shroud and placed in a coffin, both supplied by the palace, while the assassin, who had been executed, was instantly buried by the people. Obviously the religious importance of al-Akhram for al-Hakim prompted his involvement in the investiture and later on in the funeral.

There are precedents in hadith literature that attest the special status of burial garments that had been worn by the Prophet Muhammad himself. A hadith collected by the ninth-century Iraqi traditionist Ibn Saʿd (Ibn Saʿad *et al.* 1967–1972: I, 538) tells us that the Prophet was given a woolen mantle that he subsequently presented to a beggar who had requested to wear it. Public opinion criticized the man for taking advantage of the Prophet, who would have needed this garment himself but would not refuse a beggar's request. The man justified himself by answering he wanted to use the mantle as his shroud (*kafan*). The anecdote allows speculation that garments given away were not only an honor for the receiving person but also an act of benevolence on the part of the bestower.

A tradition transmitted by the tenth-century Shiʿi traditionist Ibn Babawayh al-Sadduq, active in Baghdad, contains an anecdote in which the Prophet Muhammad buried Fatima bint Asad, mother of ʿAli, in his own shirt and instructed her as to what to answer when questioned by the Angel of Death to avoid the "torment of the grave" (Eliash 1971: 270–271).

Regarding the account of the enshrouding of the Prophet Muhammad himself, Ibn Saʿd (Ibn Saʿad 1967–1972: 351) mentions a tradition related by ʿAbdallah ibn Numayr in which the Prophet was first wrapped in three white Yemeni cotton cloths. One sheet was then taken by ʿAbdallah Abu Bakr, who wanted to use it as his own shroud. However, he later sold it and gave the proceeds to charity, because he reasoned that he did not deserve to use it.

After the Prophet's death, his companions continued to present burial outfits to their followers. Ibn Saʿd mentions an incident in which the caliph ʿUmar (r. 634–644) sent five outfits (*athwab*) chosen from his storehouses or treasury to Zaynab bint Jahsh, a daughter of one of the Prophet's cousins, so that she could choose one for her funeral (Grütter 1954: 80; Ibn Saʿad 1904: 78, lines 13–16). This incident relates to the one mentioned above between the Fatimid caliph al-Muʿizz and his secretary Jawdhar, since in both the leader of the community dispatches burial outfits from his treasury to a chosen individual.

That the gifting of shrouds is a subject discussed in some detail in hadith literature concerning the early caliphate and the family of the Prophet, as Leor Halevi has established (Halevi 2007: 106–113), is the more significant since we do not possess information on the presentation of funerary outfits by the Umayyads and Abbasids. It is very likely then that the Fatimids intentionally followed the precedent established by some of their ancestors during and after the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers. By doing so they stressed their ancestral link.

During the 1990s excavations in Istabl ʿAntar, an area in the southern part of the Southern Cemetery in Cairo, by the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire under the supervision of Roland-Pierre Gayraud yielded some of the most important evidence for interpreting the use of *tiraz* textiles in burials, allowing a link to be established between archaeological and textual evidence. It was there that for the first time since the beginning of excavations in Egypt a number of Muslim burials were excavated and recorded scientifically. The excavations showed that Istabl ʿAntar had been in use over successive centuries, starting in Umayyad times. It was during the Abbasid period that the plateau of Istabl ʿAntar was gradually occupied by Cairo's expanding necropolis, the al-Qarafa al-Kubra, a process which carried on well into the Fatimid period and which resulted in the building of a number of funerary structures in the area and a mosque within a funerary compound (Gayraud 1991: 63–82). In 1992 the French team excavated parts of the Abbasid necropolis dated on the evidence of building techniques. Here walls were made of rubble bound by mortar, whereas in the Fatimid structures of this site, walls were made of large irregular stone blocks. Two funerary enclosures came to light. In these several tombs were found, some of which were mass graves (Gayraud 1994: 4–7). A very important find of an enshrouded individual was made in Tomb 12 of the second funerary enclosure (B6), reconstructed by the team as a partly subterranean structure with a flat roof and a staircase leading down into the burial chamber (Gayraud 1994: 27, fig. 26). Another comparable find of an enshrouded individual was made adjacent to the complex, where the individual was found buried in a pit, rather than a built structure (Gayraud 1994: 8). Both individuals were wrapped in a succession of large shrouds that consisted of plain undecorated linen. Both corpses were padded with raw cotton underneath the shrouds to support head and feet.

Tomb 49 was markedly different (Figure 11.4). Here in a Fatimid era mausoleum a corpse was found lying in a collapsed coffin, wrapped in a sequence of inscribed *tiraz* shrouds, the inscription bands covering the face, and the enshrouded body

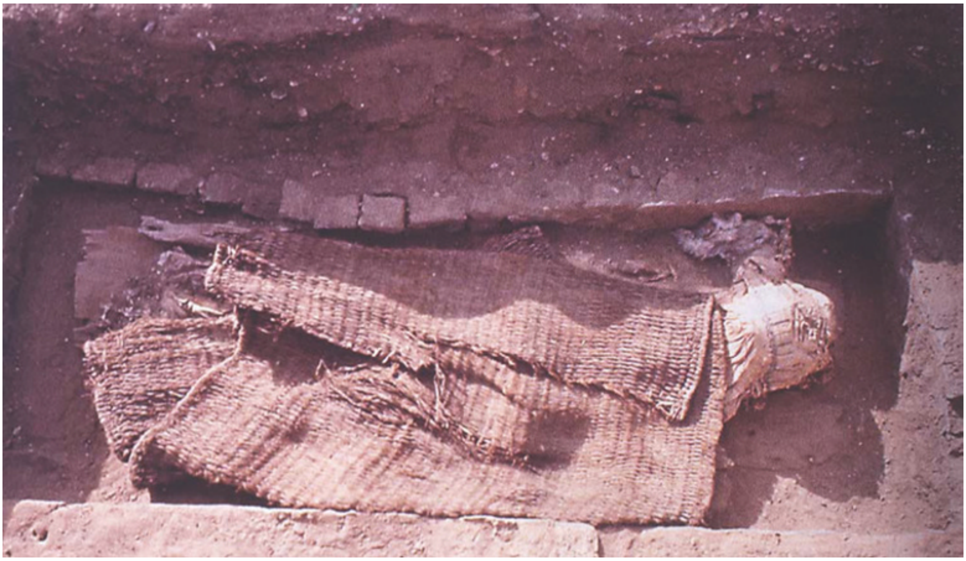

FIGURE 11.4 Enshrouded corpse from Tomb 49 in the second funerary enclosure (B6) at Istabl ʿAntar, Fustat. Source: Gayraud 1994: 27, fig. 26. Reproduced with permission.

then covered with a reed mat (Gayraud 1995: 8, 19, fig. 16). Two of the shrouds (the lower- and outermost) could be dated. The one between was decorated with a non-protocollary inscription datable from the tenth century on the basis of its style of script. The outermost shroud carried a date of 932–933, its inscription prominently visible on the deceased's face. It was made of *mulham*, a mix of cotton and silk, and embroidered in blue silk chain-stitch. The ground fabric, as well as the technique and epigraphic style of its inscription, were common in Iraq and Iran. This textile had obviously arrived in Egypt from abroad. The lowermost shroud comprised an inscription with the *laqab* (regnal title) "al-Maʿad," making it possible to date the piece either to the reign of the caliph al-Muʿizz (r. 953–975) or al-Mustansir (r. 1029–1094), both of whom had used that name. It was clear that its date was Fatimid. Since a foundation stone in the name of al-ʿAziz's mother Taghrid had previously been found within the complex, a dating of the *tiraz* inscription to al-Muʿizz seems plausible (Gayraud 1995: 8–9, 19, figs. 16–17; Ragib 1974: 67–69, pl. I). Given that the Fatimids did not conquer Egypt until 968–969 the body could not have been deposited before the arrival of al-Muʿizz in Cairo. Therefore, the find provides a date *post quem*, which suggests that the lowermost *mulham* shroud was already at least 38 years old when it came to be used in this burial.

Previous to this important find knowledge about the archaeological contexts of burials containing *tiraz* textiles had been scarce. Several eyewitness accounts by scholars who attended excavations of burial sites that yielded *tiraz* textiles exist. In 1952 Ernst Kühnel wrote that his colleague Husayn Rashid of the Arab Museum in Cairo had taken him to the opening of graves in Fustat in 1938 to show him the technique by which *tiraz* textiles were taken off the deceased.[2] The Egyptian art historian ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Marzuq records, "During my work in the excavation of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, in 1937–1939 at Ein as-Sira near Fustat, I observed that each dead body was wrapped in a series of linen shrouds. Sometimes there was a silk shroud over the linen ones, and this silk in many cases, fell into dust at the first touch. From the Kufic inscription tapestried, embroidered or painted on these shrouds we learn that they belong to the Abbasid and Fatimid periods."[3] Layla ʿAli Ibrahim remembered her father Dr. ʿAli Ibrahim monitoring excavations of burial sites in Fustat sometime between 1930 and 1932, during which most of the *tiraz* textiles now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo were found.[4] A photograph from a personal album taken during an excavation near Khadra Sharifa shows the examination of an enshrouded body placed on a stretcher (Figure 11.5).[5] One person is examining the body, another is recording the findings, and another seems to be a guard. A *tiraz* band is clearly visible covering the head. The Egyptian textile historian Suʿad Maher (Maher 1977: pl. 191) published an image comprising a detailed view of the previous scene, focusing on how a piece over the corpse's head is cut off (Figure 11.6). Both photographs provide the only pictorial evidence of the exhumation and method of examination of the deceased in the Southern Cemetery of Cairo during the 1930s. An Abbasid textile at the Metropolitan

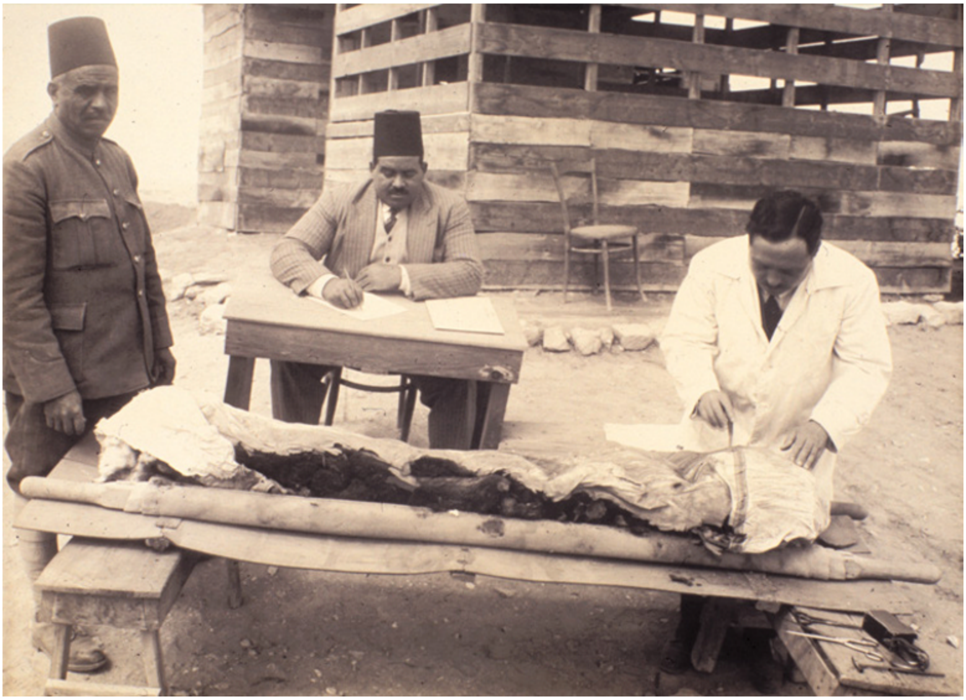

FIGURE 11.5 Members of the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, examining an enshrouded corpse at Khadra Sharifa, Fustat during the early 1930s. Source: Jochen Sokoly, after an album belonging to the late Layla ʿAli Ibrahim.

Museum, New York (Figure 11.1) shows clear cutting marks along its upper left side, as well as a circular area of decomposition and loss of material, presumably where the head would have pressed on the fabric. This is very common among surviving examples (Sokoly 1997: 73–74).

Layla ʻAli Ibrahim also confirmed that an important find of a Fatimid textile now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (inv. no. 8264) had been made in Khadra Sharifa: a fragment inscribed with the name of ʿAbd al-Rahim ibn Ilyas, heir designate to the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim and governor of Damascus, who was murdered, presumably by his own family, after he had returned to Cairo following his father's death in 1021 (Sokoly 2002: cat. no. 1416).[6]

Burial made it possible for textiles as fragile as linen or silk to survive. The textile historian Rodolphe Pfister noted in 1936 that there was a difference between the state of preservation of clothing and of furnishing textiles found in Egypt, the former having survived in burial contexts and in much better condition than the latter, which had survived in settlements, such as Fustat in Cairo.[7] Very few *tiraz* textiles have survived outside the archaeological context, mostly wrapping Christian relics, as relics themselves, or as part of a sacral depository, a *geniza*.[8] These items tend to be in good condition. Burial may also explain the stark

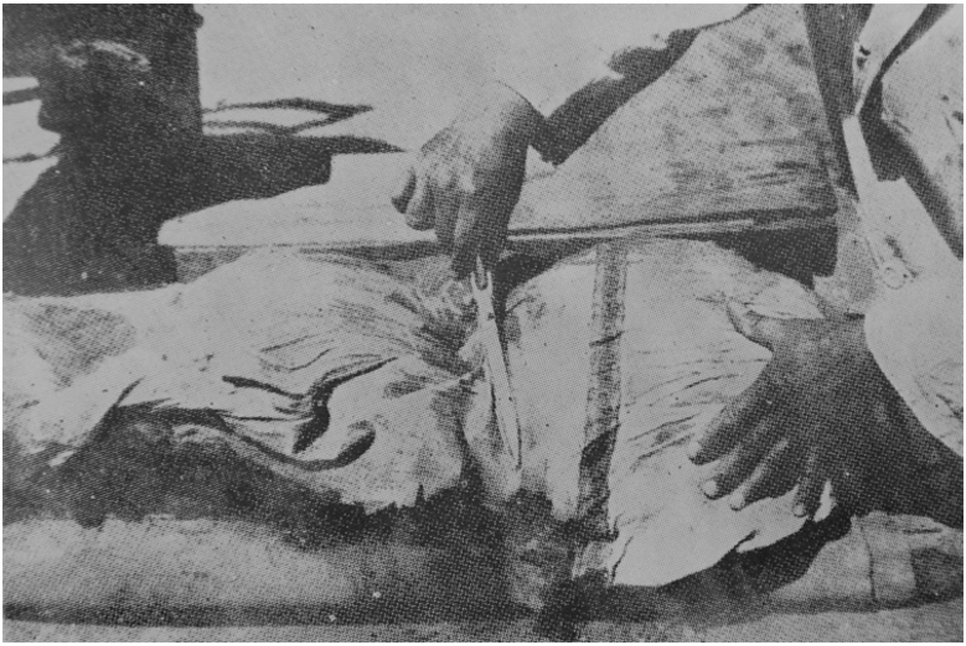

Figure 11.6 A member of the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, examining an enshrouded corpse at Khadra Sharifa, Fustat during the early 1930s and cutting away a portion covering the head. Source: Maher 1977: pl. 191.

uniformity of the surviving sample of *tiraz* textiles. Lisa Golombek (Golombek 1988: 29; Golombek and Gervers 1977: 85) was one of the first scholars who expressed doubts as to whether the extant *tiraz* textiles were representative of all early Islamic textile production in Egypt. Juxtaposing surviving examples of *tiraz* textiles with the literary sources, she identified two main areas of concern: materials and types of garments. While the literary sources mention a large variety of materials characterized by a sumptuous usage of silk, wool, and gold thread, she argued the *tiraz* group largely contains fragments of linen or cotton clothes with silk sparsely used for inscriptions or decorative bands. In addition the range of *tiraz* garments seemed to be limited to summer outfits, undergarments, turbans, shawls, sashes, napkins, presentation towels, and furnishings, such as curtains. Indeed, if one takes into account examples of compound-woven silks from Iran and Central Asia, some of which date from the ninth through eleventh centuries and most of which have survived in European church treasuries, most of the *tiraz* corpus appears rather modest. The famous Suaire de St. Josse in the Louvre inscribed with the name of the Samanid governor of Khurasan Abi Mansur Bukhtagin is a rare example of such a glamorous tenth-century silk velvet woven with gold-thread (Makariou 2012: 114–117). The famous cloth in the Textile Museum in Washington, inscribed with the name of the Buyid amir of Iraq, Fars, and Kirman, Baha' al-Dawla (r. 989–1012) and his treasurer Zadanfarrukh, is another example of a contemporary silk compound weave, with golden silk lettering on a dark blue silk ground (Jones and Michell 1976: 75, cat. no. 5). The Fatimid treasury lists (*khizana al-kiswat*) as described by the Fatimid civil servant Qadi Rashid ibn al-Zubayr also paint a divergent picture: one of variety and sumptuousness and an excessive use of gold (Romberg 1985: 53–87, tables 1–11). The outfits described in most detail are those of the caliphal family, which could contain 10 or 11 items for the caliph, five for his brother, and 16 for a princess. Linings and garments worn beneath other items, such as tunic-like garments like the *ghilala* and the *wasitani*, appear to have been mainly of linen, as also were mantles (*ardi*). In some cases the linen fabric contained silk, though whether tapestry-woven or embroidered is not known. It appears that all outer garments used large amounts of gold, such as the caliph's first ceremonial costume containing two robes and a turban that were made with around 1066.5 *mithqal* (*c.* 4.5 kg) of gold. Although much less detailed, the lists outlining the outfits of lesser relatives and palace officials also contain a large number of robes which were either made of silk, gilded, or gold-embroidered (Romberg 1985: 53–87, tables 5–10). Only the low ranks of the court hierarchy, such as servants, captains, and sailors of the caliphal barges were given "Alexandrian," "Sus," and "Damietta" cloth, which may well have been linen fabrics produced in these centers. Perhaps the only iconic surviving garment that may provide a visual memento of the splendor of Fatimid court costume is the coronation robe of Roger II made in the royal treasury (*khizana al-malikiyya*) in Palermo (Figure 11.7), most likely by Muslim

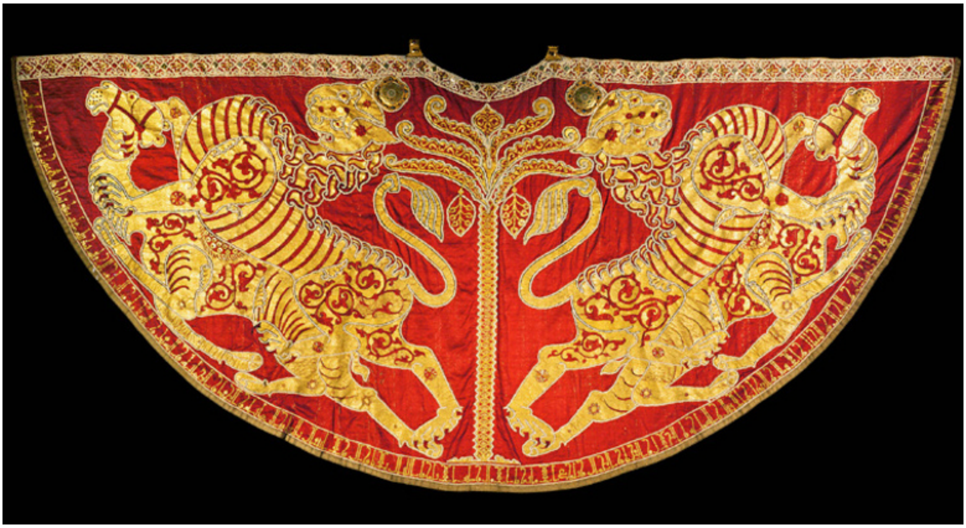

Figure 11.7 Coronation mantle of Roger II of Sicily, Palermo, *c.* 1133–1134, silk and gold embroidery, pearls, gemstones, cloisonné enamel on samite, 146 × 345 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (Vienna, Austria). Source: Erich Lessing/ART RESOURCE, NY.

craftsmen, inscribed in Arabic and dated to 1133–1134. It is embroidered with gold thread and pearls, as well as encrusted with plate gold and precious stones (Samman 1982: 31–34; Tronzo 2001; Bauer 2004).

While recent burials provide an insight into what constituted the outer layers of burial clothing, the sheets used for wrapping, information concerning items in which the deceased were dressed underneath remains scarce since no complete adult burial outfit has been published so far. Literary texts, such as those quoted above, suggest that a tailored tunic or a shirt was usually included in a burial. Tunics were an integral part of the deceased's clothing, along with items such as cloaks, trousers, underwear, handkerchiefs, veils, skullcaps, and wound-up turbans (Goitein 1983: 160, 188–189, 399, footnote 83; 1988: 160).

Three rare published complete Islamic burial tunics in Washington, Oxford, and Kuwait may provide an insight. While their upper faces are intact, but heavily stained, their reverses are much decomposed. They are constructed of individually cut sections of cloth. The Textile Museum tunic is inscribed with an embroidered *tiraz* in the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908–932) (Mackie 1996: 83, no. 58; Sokoly 2002: cat. no. 337). The inscription is located on the back of the sleeve and positioned upside down. Rather than having been tailored and subsequently embroidered, it is more likely that this tunic was tailored out of a larger sheet already inscribed, and the inscribed area was reserved for the sleeve intentionally, albeit the wrong way round. Its size suggests that it once dressed a child.

Two complete adult linen tunics in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait can be attributed to the tenth century.[9] On the front and sleeves both tunics are decorated with almost identical bands of large epigraphic decoration in a loosely embroidered silk, imitating a Kufic inscription by a continuous sequence of the letters *alif* and *lam* linked by a knotted motif, differing only in color: blue on the Ashmolean piece, yellowish beige on the Kuwaiti piece.

Apart from funerary garments, the recent archaeological evidence from Istabl Antar suggests that reed mats were used in burials to wrap loosely the enshrouded bodies of the deceased or to cover the ground on which they were laid. In Tomb 49 the body was found *in situ* wrapped in an undecorated and rather crude reed mat (Figure 11.4). In Tombs 15 and 10 reed mats were found covering the ground. Apart from being used to wrap and support the deceased, mats were also used to cover wooden planks arranged over the deceased as can be seen from photographs of the Fustat excavations (Maher 1977: pls. 187–189). In such circumstances the decomposition of the corpse would not have affected the mats at all. These finds may indicate that two complete examples in the Benaki Museum, Athens (Combe 1939; Ratliff and Evans 2012: 263–264, no. 185) and the Metropolitan Museum, New York (Dimand 1942; Ekhtiar *et al.* 2011: 50–51, no. 28) have probably come from the sheltered archaeological conditions of burials.

The Benaki mat, inscribed in Kufic characters in a style common during the later tenth century, comprises divine invocations and benedictory phrases dedicated to the mat's owner. Most importantly, the inscription states that the mat was made in a *tiraz al-khassa* in Tiberias (*Tabariyya*). The Metropolitan mat is inscribed in a comparable Kufic but only comprises benedictory phrases. Textual sources attest that Fatimid reed mats were inscribed with caliphal protocollary inscriptions and used for prayer: their wording was similar to the extant pieces described here (Jawdhari *et al.* 1954: 88; Jawdhari and Canard 1958: 129–130).

The burials at Istabl ʿAntar provide diverging evidence for the use of coffins. Several of the burials found in the Abbasid funerary enclosure were without coffin. In the Fatimid funerary enclosure, however, coffins were found in the burials of Tombs 47, 49, and 55. In a burial within a domed tomb one coffin was found which contained a number of skeletons. A coffin was also used in a burial found in the 1930s containing a corpse wrapped in a *tiraz* in the name of the caliph al-Hakim and his heir-designate ʿAbd al-Rahim ibn Ilyas (Sokoly 2002: cat. no. 1416).

The dressing and wrapping of the body was a matter of great importance. Al-Bukhari has recorded a hadith that illustrates the importance of covering the deceased correctly. During the Battle of Uhud, fought between the early Muslim community and their enemies, the body of one of the fallen soldiers, Musʿab ibn ʿUmayr, could not be properly covered by his mantle since it was too short. It either left his head or his feet exposed. Muhammad advised that his head should be covered by the mantle and his bare feet should be covered with rushes (Bukhari 1862–1908: 321). This hadith suggests that the covering a person's head properly was more important than covering the feet. From the extant burials discussed above it is clear that great care was taken to wrap the deceased, particularly the head, regardless of whether a coffin was used or not. While in the Abbasid burials found at Istabl Antar the heads were cushioned with raw cotton, in the Fatimid burials of Istabl Antar and Khadra Sharifa inscribed textiles were used for this purpose, with the *tiraz* bands placed over the eyes of the deceased. Layla ʿAli Ibrahim's eyewitness account of the excavations, discussed earlier, which suggests that this was a practice frequently found among the burials excavated by the Museum of Islamic Art and the Antiquities committee at Khadra Sharifa, can be confirmed by the finds at Istabl Antar.

The find from Tomb 49 in Istabl ʿAntar raises the issue of the concurrent use of Abbasid and Fatimid shrouds on one body (Figure 11.5). The Abbasid shroud is dated 932, while the accompanying Fatimid shroud can be attributed most probably to the reign of al-Muʿizz (prior to 975–976) (Gayraud 1995: 8–9, 19, figs. 16–17). Therefore, as noted above, the dates of the shrouds must be a minimum of 38 years apart. This poses questions relating to the age of the shrouds at the time of burial and the religious context in which the burial took place. The concurrent use of an antique and contemporary shroud shows that the Abbasid shroud at least had not been specifically made for this burial. It is possible that this piece was either inherited or saved for the occasion by the deceased. Obviously its Abbasid inscription was of no concern to those wrapping the deceased, most likely his family. Perhaps once part of the Tulunid treasury, it was circulated by the Fatimids after they had taken control of Cairo. It is also conceivable that both shrouds came out of the Fatimid treasury when its contents were looted under al-Mustansir in the 1060s. The burial from Tomb 49 in Istabl ʿAntar thus confirms that burial represented a secondary stage in the "life" of a caliphal *tiraz* textile.

A very tempting explanation for the desire of the deceased to gain *baraka* in death from the caliphal association of his shroud is the Islamic belief in Divine Judgment. The reverence extended to the caliph's name and the belief that it conveyed *baraka*, coupled with the Islamic beliefs in divine judgment after death, may have resulted in the use of inscribed garments as a way of guarding and protecting the deceased. Perhaps the *tiraz* identified the believer in the Fatimid cause from the nonbeliever on the day of judgment. The prominent placing of a *tiraz* band on the deceased's face makes this interpretation plausible. The *tiraz* may then have been an outward sign of the believer's allegiance to the right path, which would have helped ensure his consignment to Paradise.

The peculiarity of this custom, particularly taking into account the difference in wrappings between burials excavated from Fatimid and Abbasid compounds at Istabl Antar and Khadra Sharifa, suggests that we are dealing with a phenomenon which may only be understandable in terms of Ismaʿili beliefs. Allegiance to the Fatimid imam was the only way for a Ismaʿili believer to partake in the divine message and safeguard himself after death. Fatimid doctrine attributed to the imam intercessory powers (*shafaʿa*) on the day of judgment. This diverges from the Qurʾan, which generally does not allow for intercession, since God is sovereign, and stresses that each individual is responsible for his own deeds and has to account for them fully himself (Qurʾan 2: 48; 6:51). In later Sunni Islam, however, doctrines developed which allowed for the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad, who would assemble his community on the day of judgment at the *hawd*, a pond filled with a delicious sweet and milky liquid and located somewhere between the scales of justice and the bridge over the vale of Hell (*jahannam*), and intercede with God on behalf of his followers (Smith and Haddad 1981: 80). By the power of the Prophet's intercession the believers would be purged and saved from Hell.

With regard to Fatimid doctrine two significant passages exist in an account of sessions of religious instruction held with the Fatimid caliph al-Muʿizz, and collected by the Fatimid theologian Qadi al-Nuʿman (d. 974), which attribute intercessory powers to the Fatimid imam.[10] According to this, the caliph is reported to have spoken of these powers to Qadi al-Nuʿman in the following terms, explaining of the believer that: "even if his sins were as numerous as grains of sand in this world, God will forgive him and will reward him in heaven thanks to our intercession and his perseverance with us." The caliph goes on to explain, "O Nuʿman, we [i.e., the Ismaʿili imams] are the portals of God and the conduit [vehicle, channel] to God. He who gets closer to God through us and uses us as mediator (*tawassal*) will be accepted. And whoever seeks intercession through us will be answered. He who asks for forgiveness through us will be forgiven. But those who have sinned are not equal to those who have not. That is why there are ranks in heaven. And God may inflict punishment in this life on whomever he wants, for their sins.

And that is the easiest form of God's punishment" (Nuʿman ibn Muhammad 1978: 55, 72).

These two passages may offer a context to understand the use of *tiraz* textiles in Fatimid burial practice. Belief in forgiveness through the mediation of the Fatimid imam caliph on the day of judgment would provide a motive for the usage of caliphal *tiraz* textiles in Fatimid burials. The particular method of wrapping the face with the inscription may have provided the deceased with a means of testifying to his Fatimid allegiance and identity after resurrection and during the judgment.

Tiraz textiles under the Umayyads, Abbasids, and Fatimids functioned as mediators of identity between their caliphal patrons and courtly consumers. In referring to a caliph the inscription served as a symbol of caliphal hegemony, a marker of caliphal authority, and a sign of allegiance to those receiving the favor of bestowal of these exclusive items. This temporal symbolism, as it were, is fundamental in understanding *tiraz* textiles as mediators of religious identity in the Fatimid context of burial. There, the inscriptions served as tokens of caliphal sanctity. The textiles became caliphal relics, which bestowed blessing on those enshrouded in them.

Notes

1 For a very detailed discussion of Abbasid practice see also Springberg-Hinsen 2000: 59–152.

2 Kühnel 1952: 163–164. Kühnel (1927: 9) had already mentioned in a catalogue of Islamic textiles in Berlin that many had been excavated in Egyptian burial sites, particularly Akhmim/Panopolis, Manshiya/Ptolemaïs, and Dayr al-ʿAzam and Drunka, both near Assyut/Lycopolis.

3 Marzouk 1959: 283; see also Ashton 1935, who mentions Basatin, south of Cairo as a source of a large number of Abbasid and Fatimid shrouds.

4 Personal communication in Cairo, 1991.

5 I am grateful to the late Layla ʿAli Ibrahim, Cairo, who kindly permitted me to use a copy of the image for my research.

6 Personal communication in Cairo, 1991.

7 Pfister 1936: 83; two *tiraz* textiles from the reign of al-Muqtadir were found at Fustat among 3000 extremely fragmentary textile fragments (Mackie 1989: 81–82, 85 and 89–90, nos. 1–2; Sokoly 2002: cat. nos. 574.3 and 574.4); two caliphal *tiraz* textiles were found during Sarre and Herzfeld's excavations at Samarra, one in an underground passage of the Jawsaq al-Khaqani palace from al-Muʿtamid's reign made in Tinnis (Egypt), the other from al-Muntasir's reign (Helmecke 2014; Herzfeld 1948: 274, no. 9).

8 The Veil of St. Anne (489–490/1095–1097), Church of St. Anne in Apt, Provence (Martiniani-Reber 1992: 53–54; Sokoly 2002: cat. no. 1789); the Suaire de Cadouin, Perigord (Martniani-Reber 1992: 54); four Abbasid fragments, Church of Enda Abuna Aragawi at Dabra Dammo, province of Tigrai, Eritrea (Matthews and Mordini 1959; Sokoly 2002: cat. nos. 86, 165, 763 and 773); Erzherzog Rainer Papyrus Collection, Vienna (Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer 1894: 227–228, no. 849).

9 Ashmolean Museum, Inv. no. 1998.270 (Barnes 1999 published a C-14 test, suggesting a date of 930 +/– 35 years); Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, inv. no. LNS 57 T (Jenkins 1983: 105).

10 I am grateful to my colleague Sabri Jarrar for his help in translating these passages.

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Part IV

"City States" and the Later Baghdad Caliphate (1050–1250)

The status of the Abbasid caliphs as the virtual puppets of the Buyid amirs came to an end in 1055 when the Seljuqs (r. 1037–1094) conquered Baghdad, ending the period of Shiʿi rule. Ethnic Turks, whose ancestral homelands lay between the Caspian and Aral Seas, the Seljuqs had converted to Islam in the course of the tenth century. A significant Turkic presence had existed in the central Islamic lands from the ninth century, when the Abbasids imported large numbers of Turkic slaves and soldiery from Central Asia to stock their armies that played a prominent role in the urban settlement patterns of Samarra. However, the arrival of the Seljuqs marked the beginning of a period of expanded political ascendancy, characterized by the emergence in the Islamic lands of Kurdish and Turkish dynasties as well as Berber, Arab, and Persian.

At the end of the eleventh century, the appearance of the Crusaders, the weakening power of Fatimid caliphs, who were increasingly dependent on a series of powerful viziers, and the death of the long-reigning Seljuq sultan Malik Shah (r. 1072–1092) created a situation of profound instability in the eastern Islamic world. The fall of Jerusalem to the First Crusade in 1099 and the establishment of Latin Christian kingdoms posed a significant threat to both the Abbasid and Fatimid caliphates. It was not until the middle of the twelfth century that an effective reaction was galvanized, under the aegis of Nur al-Din ibn Zangi (r. 1146–1174). In 1171, Salah al-Din (Saladin), then the subordinate of Nur al-Din, brought an end to Fatimid rule, with the result that Egypt was brought back under the aegis of the Abbasid caliphs and Sunni rule for the first time in two

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centuries. In 1187, Saladin succeeded in liberating Jerusalem from Crusader control, although the Crusader kingdoms endured until 1291.

Nur al-Din is typical of the kind of regionally based warlord who flourished in the eastern Mediterranean and the central Islamic lands during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, which saw the regionalization of political authority, the militarization of urban landscapes, and the proliferation of fortified citadels. In this context of fragmentation, former caliphal empires gave way to smaller polities that may be characterized as city states, especially after the collapse of the Great Seljuq dynasty of Iran and the emergence of Seljuq successor states in the Middle East. In the Islamic West, the Christian *Reconquista* movement, the fall of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba in 1031, and the emergence of regional Islamic principalities known as the *taifas* gave rise to a parallel condition.

Art and architecture were integral to and affected by these developments. Seljuq rule is closely associated with what is often described as a "Sunni revival," but the relationship between the Seljuq sultans and the Abbasid caliphs was often fraught. The Seljuq vizier Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092) promoted the institution of the madrasa, in part to counter the influence of Shiʿism, giving architectural form to an institution that was to become commonplace throughout the Islamic world. While royal cities, mosques, and palaces were the main building types of the age of caliphs, the Seljuqs promoted a wider range of charitable monuments providing public services as a testimonial to sultanic justice. The Islamic East saw the emergence of not only madrasas but also Sufi lodges (*khanqah*, *zawiya*, or *ribat*), hospitals, caravanserais along major routes, and bridges. These structures often formed multifunctional complexes, attached to the mausoleum of the founder, and supported by generous endowments (*waqf*). This was paralleled by a widening base of patronage that increasingly included elite women.

Under Nur al-Din, who founded such a funerary complex in Damascus, madrasas proliferated in Syria. This period also saw the introduction into Syria of architectural forms associated with the heartlands of the Abbasid caliphs; these included the four-iwan plan, *muqarnas* vaulting and domes, the use of cursive scripts for monumental inscriptions, and forms of knotted geometric ornament (*girih*) composed of interlocking stars and polygons.

As far west as the Maghrib, two Berber (Amazigh) dynasties that had emerged in the aftermath of the collapse of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba – the Almoravids (1040–1147), who were Abbasid vassals, and their autonomous Almohad successors (1121–1269), who claimed the caliphate for themselves – erected monuments with comparable formal and ornamental elements, as discussed in Abigail Balbale's chapter. The two dynasties extended their rule from North Africa to Spain, thereby bridging with mutual artistic exchanges both sides of the formerly divided Strait of Gibraltar. Previously dismissed as derivative of a more developed Andalusian tradition, the artistic innovations of these Berber dynasties are currently being re-evaluated in positive terms that acknowledge their role as major players and tastemakers in the western Mediterranean.

Muqarnas vaulting, cursive monumental inscriptions, Islamicate geometric patterns, and figural imagery also appeared in the twelfth-century monuments of Norman Sicily, a multicultural kingdom whose exchanges with both the Maghrib and Fatimid Egypt are examined in Lev A. Kapitaikin's chapter. Transculturation in the art and architecture of the eastern Mediterranean basin between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, on the other hand, constitutes the subject of a complementary chapter by Eva R. Hoffman and Scott Redford that calls for a holistic treatment of this region.

Some of the new building types and artistic forms may have been adopted or promoted as part of the "Sunni revival," signifying the allegiance of regional dynasts to the Abbasid caliphate. Their adoption in the lands to the west of Iraq would, therefore, reflect an important paradox: the rise of regional polities generally enhanced the status of the Abbasid caliphs, to whom many Sunni dynasts professed loyalty, augmenting the status and symbolic clout of the caliphate. At the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, the waning of Seljuq control enabled a revival in the political fortunes of the Abbasid caliphs, who sought to capitalize on the allegiance of regional rulers by promoting ecumenical forms of Sunni Islam. During the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustansir (1226–1242), for example, the first ecumenical madrasa, capable of accommodating all four legal schools of Sunni Islam was erected in Baghdad. This phenomenon is analyzed in Yasser Tabbaa's chapter on the resurgence of the late Baghdad caliphate.

Between the mid-eleventh and mid-twelfth century, expansion through campaigns of conquest and trade greatly enlarged the geographical range of the territories ruled by those professing allegiance to Baghdad. In the west, the trading activities of the Almoravids and Almohads saw the beginnings of Islamicization in West Africa. In the eastern Mediterranean and as far south as Yemen, the Abbasid caliph enjoyed the support of the Ayyubid dynasty (1171–1260), one of the Seljuq successor states founded by Saladin. In Anatolia, the advance of Seljuq armies in the eleventh century had seen the establishment of Turkic polities on the former territories of Byzantium. The most successful of these, the Seljuqs of Rum (Rome), established their capital at Konya in west central Anatolia. The Rum Seljuqs actively promoted trade within and beyond their territories, founding a series of spectacular caravanserais comparable to those built earlier by their ancestors in Iran.

The Anatolian territories ruled by the Rum Seljuqs were ethnically and religiously diverse, a heterogeneity reflected in the richness of the art and architecture produced there. It is, for example, from this mixed milieu of Christians and Muslims that the first extant illustrated Persian manuscript survives, a manuscript that depicts the Prophet Muhammad as a miracle-working resurrectionist. The proliferation of Sufi lodges added to the doctrinal diversity of the region, and fostered the development of pilgrimage networks that connected geographically distant regions of the Islamic world.

Developments in Anatolia find contemporary counterparts on the eastern frontier of the Abbasid caliphate, where a series of dramatic changes radically reconfigured the cultural and political landscape in the decades around 1200. Around 1150, the Ghaznavid sultans of Afghanistan (r. 977–1186), rivals of the Great Seljuqs and major patrons of art and architecture, came under pressure from the little-known *malik*s (kings/chiefs) of Ghur, a remote mountainous region in central Afghanistan. By 1186 the Ghurid sultans had overthrown the Ghaznavids and embarked on a rapid campaign of eastward expansion led by their Turkic mamluks (slave-soldiers). By the time that the Ghurid sultanate collapsed around 1210, most of north India had been brought under their control, incorporated into the territories of the *Dar al-Islam* for the first time. With the demise of the Ghurids, their Turkic generals assumed control of these Indian territories, Delhi emerging as the capital of an independent sultanate by the 1220s. In their ethnic and religious diversity, the Indian territories of the Ghurids and early Delhi sultans bear comparison to other "frontier" regions of the Islamic world, such as Anatolia. Hence both regions have been treated comparatively in this section by the chapter of Howard Crane and Lorenz Korn, a connective approach that aims to mediate tensions between earlier Irano-centric paradigms and more recent attempts to understand the monuments of these two frontier regions on their own terms. In addition, the Ghurids, the early Delhi sultans, the Rum Seljuqs in Anatolia, and other Seljuq successor states such as the Zangids and Ayyubids were assiduously courted by the Abbasid caliphate, seeking and receiving banners, robes of honor, and other insignia that materialized their right to rule under the ultimate aegis of the revived Abbasid imperium.

The dramatic political developments across the Islamic world in the period between 1050 and 1250 were reflected in its visual culture. Indeed, the latter part of this period should be considered one of the most significant in the development of Islamic art and architecture. In almost every region of the Islamic lands, it is only from this period onward that monumental architecture survives in significant quantities. Many of the extant monuments display notable formal innovations, including experiments in vaulting, external articulation, and polychromy enhanced with the use of color glazed tiles. In the Maghrib and al-Andalus, distinctive forms of stucco and carved wooden ornament were developed. In the eastern Islamic world, stucco and brickwork continued to be favored, with terracotta and blue-glazed tiles (later on with an expanded color palette) emerging as major decorative media. Often combined with brick and color-glazed tiles, stone was the favored medium in Anatolia, whose monuments show strong connections not only to the Seljuq architecture of Iran but also to that of the Seljuq successor states in Syria and the Christian monuments of Armenia and Georgia. Unlike the preference for stone domes and colored marble inlay decoration in Syria and later Egypt, Persianate color-glazed tiles and brick domes proliferated in Seljuq Anatolia. Similarly, the early monuments erected in India negotiated between traditions of brick architecture long established in the Persianate world and the facility of building in stone that had been developed by north Indian stone masons working for Hindu patrons during the preceding centuries. Another common characteristic was the frequent use of spolia, especially in India and Anatolia but also in other regions.

In the domain of the portable arts, the century between 1150 and 1250 witnessed a period of extraordinary artistic developments closely related to an expansion of the patronage base beyond the courtly milieu. It was, for example, the decades either side of 1200 that saw the proliferation of manuscript production on a large scale in the Islamic world for the first time, with the centers of production being located in Iraq and Syria. This phenomenon is analyzed by Anna Contadini with respect to the evidence for the role of an emergent urban bourgeoisie in the patronage of the arts, with a particular focus on illustrated manuscripts. At the same time, the adoption of new ceramic technologies and media such as frit or stone paste enabled potters in the Islamic world to better approximate the ideal of Chinese porcelain that provided the benchmark for the work of luxury ceramics. These technological advances are assessed by Oliver Watson in his chapter on ceramics and circulation. In eastern Iran, the emergence of an inlaid metalwork industry permanently altered the appearance of Islamic metalwork, the subject of James W. Allan and Ruba Kana'an's chapter on the socioeconomic dimensions of artifacts in this medium, particularly those bearing inscriptions and signatures that shed precious light on the biographies of objects. The rise in the number of craftsmen signing their works was paralleled by the increasing number of surviving portable arts with named patrons. However, objects commissioned by specific patrons were complemented by mass production. Transmedial design concepts traveled across various crafts, including illuminated manuscripts, and the bazaar was a major site of artistic interchange in this era, prior to the growing prominence of court workshops in post-Mongol times.

Many of these artistic developments can be associated with the mobility of artisans, artifacts, and technical knowledge. The emergence of inlaid metalwork in eastern Iran has, for example, been linked to the influx of both Indian booty and slaves from contemporary campaigns of expansion into north India; the technique would later spread to Iraq, Syria, and Egypt with major implications for the future history of Islamic metalwork. Similarly, the birth of a commercial luxury ceramic industry in Kashan, central Iran, seems to be linked to the migration of potters from Egypt after the collapse of the Fatimid caliphate there in 1171. The same period also saw an upsurge in the production of artifacts and written literature on magic, partly owing to the intermingling of occult sciences and Islamic devotional elements with the thirteenth-century efflorescence of Sufism. Previously understudied by art historians, this subject is addressed by Venetia Porter, Liana Saif, and Emilie Savage-Smith with reference to such objects as amulets, medicinal bowls, talismanic shirts, and mirrors. During the same period, trade with the west coast of India intensified, an intensification documented not only by finds of Indian textiles in the ports of the Red Sea but by the letters of

Jewish merchants who traded between Egypt, Aden, and western India, and whose correspondence offers remarkable insights into the scale and nature of a trade that was inter-confessional in its nature.

This world of extraordinary artistic foment was brought to a premature end in 1258, when the reviving fortunes of the Abbasid caliphs were terminated with the sack of Baghdad and the murder of the caliph al-Mustaʿsim by the Mongols. Following half a millennium as the cultural fulcrum of the Islamic world, Baghdad was reduced to the status of a relatively provincial city within a vast transregional Mongol Empire. The aftermath of this major turning point in the history of Islamic art and architecture constitutes the subject of the second volume of *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture.*

12

The Resurgence of the Baghdad Caliphate

Yasser Tabbaa

Baghdad of the later Abbasids (1050–1258) presents the art historian with multiple paradoxes that do not offer easy solutions. Its legendary image as the Round City surrounded by fabulous palaces is difficult to reconcile with a completely altered medieval urban form. Its ruler, the Abbasid caliph himself, possessed less military or political power than nearly any of the non-Arab sultans or governors who ruled most of the central Islamic lands in the period under consideration. And yet, the Abbasid caliphate remained to its end the source of legitimation for these arriviste dynasties and the symbolic safeguard of the Islamic world. Finally, its once great monuments have largely vanished, and the ones that have survived do not match those in contemporary Cairo or Isfahan in number, size, or luxury.

There are several explanations for the relative dearth of Islamic monuments in Baghdad and the absence of a unifying congregational mosque in it, including destructive invasions, fragile building materials, the limited building activity of later caliphs, and the sectarian nucleation of later medieval Baghdad. There is little question, in the first place, that the devastating effects of various invasions, particularly the Mongol invasion of 1258, contributed to the destruction of medieval monuments. Second, the relatively fragile brick architecture in Baghdad has not withstood the exceedingly harsh climate, with brutally hot summers, rainy winters, and especially, high water table. Third, unlike their architecturally prodigious ancestors of the eighth and ninth centuries, later Abbasid caliphs generally retreated behind their palace gates, leaving architectural patronage to Seljuq sultans and governors, with only minimal participation by patricians and court officials (Le Strange 1901: 331). Finally, Baghdad appears in the Middle Ages as a nucleated city divided along sectarian lines, with each sect centered around its own places of cult and worship:

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Sunnis in Rusafa and al-Aʿzamiyya; Shiʿis in Karkh and al-Kazimiyya; with the shrines of Sufi saints, including ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Gailani and ʿUmar al-Suhrawardi providing other centers of settlement (Ibn Jubayr 2001: 226–228).

Brief Political and Urban History

When the Great Seljuqs under Tughril Beg took over Baghdad in 1055, they sought to dress their takeover of the caliphate under the guise of the restoration of the Sunni caliphate. The intricate relationship between the Abbasid caliphate, the Seljuq sultanate, and their common adversary, the Fatimid caliphs of Cairo, would largely define the course of the Abbasid caliphate and its capital until the middle of the twelfth century, after which the Abbasids witnessed a period of revival and autonomy that would end with the Mongol invasion of 1258. As such, the history of the late Baghdad caliphate falls into two nearly equal periods: the period of Seljuq domination and Sunni revival (1055–*c.* 1150), and the period of the resurgent caliphate and Sunni ecumenism (*c.* 1150–1258).

Although it is sometimes asserted that the Great Seljuqs were the primary force behind the Sunni revival, traditionalist policies had in fact already been quite actively pursued by the caliph al-Qadir (r. 991–1031), whose Qadiri creed would become the cornerstone of the new Abbasid orthodoxy and the official dogma of the caliphate.[1] Qadirism stood for a traditionalist Sunni theology under the spiritual leadership of the Abbasids, while opposing all rationalist interpretations of the dogma, in particular those put forth by the Ismaʿili Fatimids. The Qadiri creed remained the cornerstone of the new Abbasid orthodoxy to the end, but it was modified in the middle of the twelfth century into an ecumenical Sunni creed that aimed to unite the four schools of jurisprudence (*madhhab*s) against Ismaʿilism. Interestingly, Baghdad's new status as a city state in the twelfth century finds further confirmation in its fortified urban form, whereby its most populous eastern part, largely Rusafa, became enclosed within a wall. Erected by the caliph al-Mustarshid (r. 1118–1135) and frequently restored in subsequent centuries, this wall continued to enclose and define Baghdad proper until the nineteenth century (Ibn al-Athir 1987: vol. 9, 28). Within it, Rusafa/East Baghdad assumed a rectangular form: bordered on the southwest by the Tigris River; anchored at its western corner by a citadel; and surrounded on its northwestern, northeastern, and southeastern sides by a curtain wall with round towers and four gates. Commanding the middle of this rectangle and facing the Tigris on the southwest was the Dar al-Khilafa (Palace of the Caliphate), which seems to have been a semicircular enclosure. Facing Rusafa on the opposite bank of the Tigris, stretched the smaller walled city of Karkh, while about 1 km upstream stood the even smaller settlements of al-Aʿzamiyya and al-Kazimiyya around the shrines of the imam Abu Hanifa, founder of one of the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence, and of the two Shiʿi imams, Musa al-Kazim and Muhammad al-Jawad.

The second phase of the late Abbasid caliphate effectively began with the death of the Seljuq sultan Masʿud during the caliphate of al-Muqtafi (r. 1136–1160), at which point the sultanate had already lost much of its authority. Further enforcing this trend, the two succeeding caliphs al-Mustanjid (r. 1160–1170) and al-Mustadiʾ (r. 1170–1180) ruled Iraq independently while enjoying cordial and mutually supportive relations with the Zangid ruler of Syria Nur al-Din (r. 1146–1174) and his Ayyubid general (and later ruler in his own right) Saladin, who in 1172 had brought down the Fatimid caliphate and restituted the Abbasid *khutba* (Friday sermon) in Egypt. These significant developments prepared the way for the caliph al-Nasir, who acceded to the throne in 1180 and ruled for 45 years until 1225, making him the longest reigning Abbasid caliph. Politically, his reign signals the end of the rule of the Seljuq Turks in 1194, when they were ousted from Iran by the Khwarazmshahs, who unsuccessfully attempted to replace them as sultans. This gave al-Nasir greater freedom to assert his uncontested rule over Iraq, from Tikrit to Khuzistan. In addition to his political gains, al-Nasir reversed his father's repressive measures against Shiʿis and practiced a more inclusive and purposeful policy that aimed to foster greater cohesion between Sunnis and Imami Shiʿis.[2] More than anything al-Nasir is known for his patronage of the *futuwwa*, an urban social group that had long existed in Islamic cities but that was reorganized by him along Sufi-ʿAlid lines and made into a chivalric order and an instrument of government. The *futuwwa* also promoted a sense of Arab identity and anti-Turkish bias, based on language, common lore, and allegiance to the Abbasid caliphate. This, in turn, may account for the astonishing popularity of the typically Arab prose works of the *Maqamat* (Assemblies) genre in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (see below and Contadini, CHAPTER 17).

Al-Mustansir (r. 1226–1242), the penultimate Abbasid caliph, is best remembered for his architectural patronage, in particular his foundation of the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya on the banks of the Tigris in 1233. He was succeeded by his son al-Mustaʿsim, whose reign would end in 1258 with the Mongol invasion and the final collapse of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad. Although the destructive nature of the Mongol invasion is sometimes exaggerated, there is little question that they razed the caliphal city and tore down the Mosque of the Caliphs, which was founded in the tenth century, forever depriving Baghdad of a unifying congregational mosque.

Fortifications

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, significant sections of the Baghdad enclosure still existed, consisting of a very thick brick curtain wall, several round towers, a deep moat connected with the Tigris, and four main gates. Of these gates – Muʿazzam (North) Gate, Dhafariya (Wastani) Gate, Halaba (Talisman) Gate, and Basaliya Gate – only the second and third have survived long enough for documentation and study. The most impressive of these gates, the Talisman Gate, consisted, before its destruction in 1917, of a massive cylindrical tower with a flat façade dominated by a single pointed arch, which had already been walled up in the seventeenth century (Le Strange 1901: 291). First built sometime around the middle of the twelfth century, it was rebuilt in 1221 by al-Nasir and renamed the "Talisman" Gate after the unusual figural relief sculpture carved above its central arch. Springing from a pair of recumbent lions, this arch is surmounted by a fine relief sculpture that shows a crowned cross-legged figure wearing the baggy trousers associated with the *futuwwa*, with arms stretched to either side, grasping with his hands the tongues of two dragons whose plaited serpentine bodies fill the entire panel. Composed over a background of very fine arabesque and flanked on both sides by a magnificent inscription in *thuluth* script that gives the foundation date and full titulature of al-Nasir, this gate was one of the finest works of medieval Islamic military architecture. The iconography of its quite unique relief sculpture has been interpreted as a victory monument that commemorates al-Nasir's victories in the late twelfth century over the Seljuq sultan of Iran, Tughril III, and the Khwarazmshah, ʿAlaʾ al-Din Tekish.[3]

Dhafariya (Wastani) Gate, located in the middle of the northeastern wall, across a modern street from the mausoleum of ʿUmar al-Suhrawardi, is the only extant gate of the entire Baghdad enclosure. Like the Talisman Gate, it consists of a circular tower (14.5 m high with a circumference of 56 m) that is effectively surrounded by a moat on all sides. Two bridges, at 90° to each other, each resting on two arches, link the tower simultaneously to the city and to the surrounding countryside, turning the single round tower into a bent-axis gate. Internally, the tower comprises a domed central octagon with eight radiating vaulted chambers that support an upper level of defense with loopholes and brattices along the entire circumference of the tower. As with the Talisman Gate, the tower was crowned by a large inscription, dated 618 (1221), which is still partially preserved. These two inscriptions are noted for their size, length, and calligraphic quality, features that attest to the superiority of calligraphy in Baghdad, as we shall see below.

The two entrances of this tower, intramural and extramural, have been squared off in order to create monumental portals, of which the inner one retains much of its original composition and decoration (Figure 12.1). Slightly recessed within the surrounding brickwork, the portal rises from a keel-shaped arch whose voussoirs spring from a pair of recumbent lions, a very common feature in this period for towers and gates and generally interpreted in terms of power and protection (Rabbat 2006: 94–99). The arch is topped by a rectangular panel with a complex geometric pattern of large 12-pointed stars surrounded by alternating squares and rhombuses, over delicate vegetal arabesque patterns.

The Dar al-Khilafa, the royal palace-city of the Abbasid caliphs occupied about one quarter the area of East Baghdad, making it a city within a city, an urban situation that recalls Fatimid Cairo (see Anderson and Pruitt, CHAPTER 9). More of

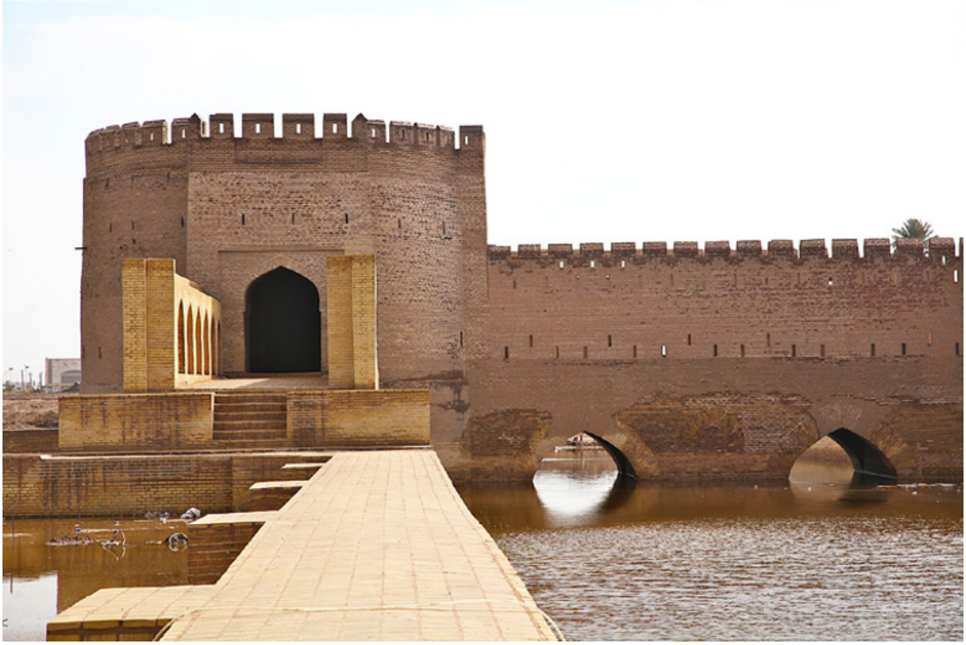

Figure 12.1 Baghdad: Dhafariya (Wastani) Gate, 1221, from north. Source: Yasser Tabbaa. Reproduced with permission.

a palatial enclosure than an actual palace, the semicircular grounds were surrounded by a wall pierced with nine gates, of which one was a secret subterranean gate and another led directly to the Mosque of the Caliphs (Masjid al-Khulafaʾ). Completely vanished and rather poorly described in the sources, it seems that the Dar al-Khilafa comprised pavilions and kiosks facing the Tigris, including al-Hasani, al-Rayhan, al-Firdaws, and al-Taj.[4] The Harem quarters were at the opposite end, with gardens in between (Le Strange 1901: 263–268). At its northern edge, the Palace of the Caliphate was linked with the Mosque of the Caliphs, first built by al-Muqtafi in the middle of the twelfth century but restored by al-Mustansir, from whose time the minaret still remains.

Religious Architecture

Baghdad presents a very incomplete picture of religious architecture in comparison to other Islamic cities, where a measure of architectural continuity is often provided by the congregational mosque of the city. Lacking a composite multiphase mosque – such as the Masjid-i Jamiʿ in Isfahan, the Great Mosque of Damascus, or the al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo – and the numerous pious institutions typical of medieval Islamic cities, later Abbasid architecture in Baghdad is largely defined by two important thirteenth-century monuments, two tombs with conical *muqarnas* domes, and a handful of minarets. Furthermore, all these structures date to the first half of the thirteenth century, after the decline of Seljuq power and before the coming of the Mongols in 1258.

In terms of minarets, of all the mosques built by the Abbasid caliphs and Seljuq sultans, what remains is a handful of minarets, two of which date from the pre-Mongol period, and a third, once belonging to the Mosque of the Caliphs, was rebuilt in the early Mongol period. The two late Abbasid minarets – belonging to the mosques al-Khaffafin and Qumriyya and dating to the first three decades of the thirteenth century – are nearly identical in their baked brick building material and overall form. Both begin from a polygonal base, largely hidden today within later mosques, proceed to thick cylindrical shafts that develop into a corbelled *muqarnas* zone supporting a balcony, and end in a tapered cylindrical shaft capped by a little dome. Also both are entered from the roof of the mosque rather than at the ground level. The al-Khaffafin mosque, located just northwest of the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya, was first founded by Zumurrud Khatun, wife of al-Mustadi᾽ and mother of al-Nasir, before her death in 1202 (Janabi 1982: 61). The original mosque has entirely vanished, having been replaced by an undated mosque from the Ottoman period, to which must also date the geometric tile-work at the top of the minaret. Similarly, the minaret of the Qumriyya mosque is undated and has been subsumed within a later mosque, but according to textual sources the original mosque was completed in 626 (1228), which must also be the date of the minaret. Bulky and rather poorly proportioned in comparison to its predecessor, the Qumriyya minaret nevertheless shows some delicate *hazar-baf* (thousand weaves) brick ornament, which is arrayed as rhomboid squares that enclose small crosses.

In addition to mosques, Baghdad was provided with a number of significant funerary monuments, particularly tomb towers. In a well-known Persian painting dated 1475 and entitled “The Flood of Baghdad,” the artist shows a bird’s-eye view of both banks of the city with numerous conical domes dotting its landscape.[5] These conical domes, sometimes also called *muqarnas* domes, most likely originated in Baghdad sometime in the eleventh century, although the earliest existing example – the Imam Dur of 1088 – is located in Samarra.[6] Two of these Baghdadi conical domes have survived – the mausoleum of Zumurrud Khatun (Figure 12.2), just beyond the edge of Karkh; and the shrine of ʿUmar al-Suhrawardi, very near the Wastani Gate – extra-urban locations that seem to fit their funerary status. Most likely founded by al-Nasir for his pious and charitable mother, the mausoleum of Zumurrud Khatun consists of an octagonal base from which springs a nine-layered conical *muqarnas* dome capped by a small cupola. Each face of the octagonal base is divided grid-like into four panels, the lower two rectangular and the upper square, topped by a narrow frieze. All panels are decorated with geometric brickwork in the *hazar-baf* mode with some geometric strapwork.

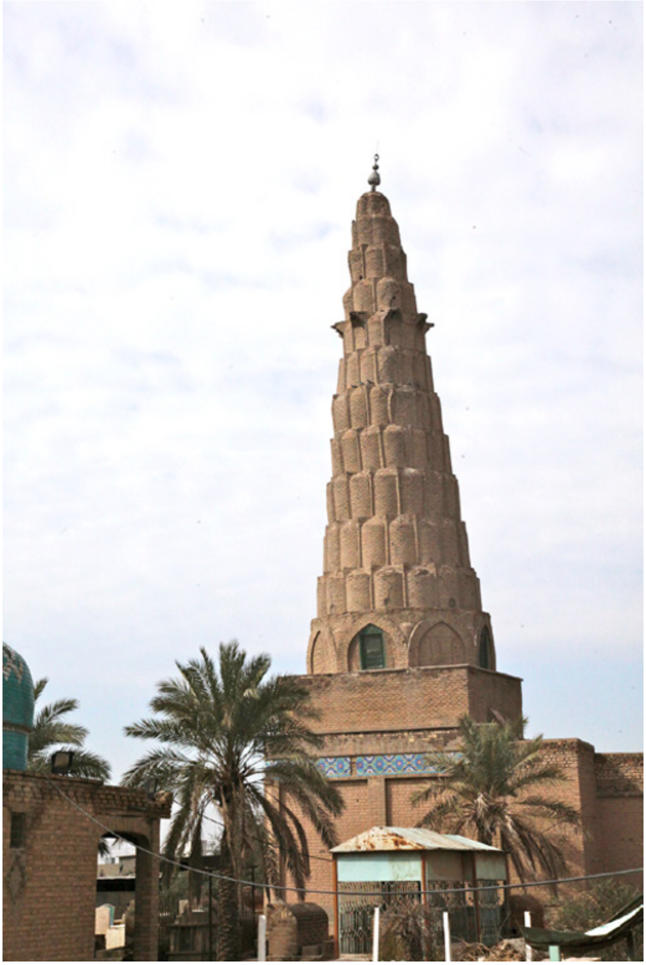

FIGURE 12.2 Baghdad: Conical dome of ʿUmar al-Suhrawardi, early thirteenth century. Source: Yasser Tabbaa. Reproduced with permission.

Today, the tomb is entered from a square domed chamber whose ribbed vaulting suggests a Timurid rebuilding of an earlier structure. The walls of the interior octagon, which correspond to the exterior octagon, are perfectly vertical to the height of 9.5 m, above which begin nine zones of corbeled and staggered *muqarnas* zones that end in a tiny eight-pointed star. Each *muqarnas* cell has been cut and covered in thick glass whose inner glow produce a dazzling effect unknown in other *muqarnas* domes.

The shrine of the Sufi shaykh Shihab al-Din ʿUmar al-Suhrawardi (d. 1234) occupies the focal point of a shrine complex that was first founded soon after Suhrawardi's death. It was subsequently augmented with a beautiful Ilkhanid façade in 735 (1334), an Ottoman mosque, and later restorations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These significant additions to the thirteenth-century shrine demonstrate the affection and veneration that were accorded to this pivotal Sufi figure, who became the official Sufi master of Baghdad during the caliphate of al-Nasir (Schimmel 1975: 245–246). The actual mausoleum is an even more attenuated version of Zumurrud Khatun's tomb, resembling a conical tower more than a dome. Internally, the original conical vault is today largely invisible owing to the addition of a hemispherical dome, possibly under the Ottomans, just above the first *muqarnas* zone (Hadithi and Khāliq 1974: 39–43).

Among the madrasas of Baghdad one in particular, the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya achieved renown throughout the Islamic world. Six years in construction, from 625 (1227) to 631 (1233), this madrasa was seen by contemporary writers as nothing less than a wondrous creation (Figure 12.3). Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1256) wrote, "There is no equal to this madrasa in the world; and nothing like it has been built in previous years," a sentiment repeated by Ibn al-Fuwati (d. 1323), who actually taught at this madrasa. Ibn Battuta in 1327 wrote, "Its appearance is unique and its elegant organization miraculous, lofty to the reaches of heaven … It is the Kaʿba of mankind and the dome of Islam." Other writers, including al-Dhahabi (d. 1348), Ibn Kathir (d. 1373), and Ibn ʿAnbah (d. 1426) spoke glowingly of its vast and unique library, its well-equipped stationery store, and the personal attention it was accorded by the caliph himself. In more recent

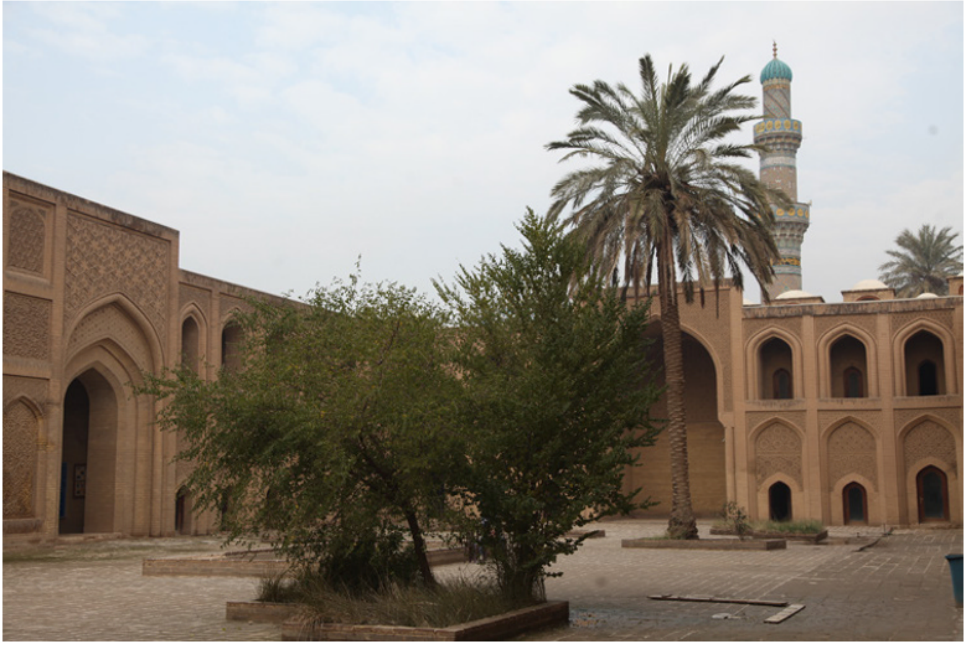

FIGURE 12.3 Baghdad: Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya, completed 1233, courtyard from east. Source: Yasser Tabbaa. Reproduced with permission.

times, the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya has been studied by Ernst Herzfeld, K.A.C. Creswell, Hansjorg Schmid, and by several Iraqi scholars.[7]

The importance and uniqueness of the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya can be further attested in the long and detailed list of jurists and luminaries who taught in it over several centuries[8] and especially in the great pomp and ceremony that accompanied its dedication. Ibn al-Athir wrote,

> On Thursday the fifth of Rajab (631/1233) Nasir al-Din, the Vice Minister, and all the governors (*wali*s), chamberlains (*hajib*s), judges, professors, and jurists; and the *shaykh*s of *ribat*s and Sufis, preachers, Qurʾan readers, poets, and a group of the select among the merchants and the foreigners were present at the madrasa. The Vice Minister selected for each *madhhab* [law school] in the madrasa 62 students, and appointed for it two professors and two assistant professors … Each professor was presented with a black cloak, a dark blue robe, and a fully caparisoned mule. As for the assistants … each was offered a white coat and a silver-threaded turban … A dinner was then spread in the entire courtyard of the madrasa. (1987: vol. 11, 284)

The Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya is located right on the Tigris River, about 100 m upstream from the outer wall of Dar al-Khilafa and about half that distance from the Seljuq Madrasa al-Nizamiyya. An approximate rectangle – 104.8 m long with a width that expands from 44.2 m to 48.8 m at the southern end – the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya was larger and more lavishly built than any other madrasa of the first half of the thirteenth century (Schmid 1980: pl. 15). Unlike Syrian and Egyptian madrasas and more like Iranian ones, it was intended to be freestanding, as is clear from its lightly ornamented exterior brickwork; the inscription bands on three sides, of which only the one facing the river has survived; and the monumental portal in the middle of its long northeastern side. For centuries hidden behind a bazaar that extended along its entire entrance façade, the lofty portal now rises about 16.5 m above a narrow street and projects from the flanking walls by 3.50 m. A rabbeted frame, dominated by a large twisted cable molding, articulates this portal, which takes on the form of a shallow pointed iwan that encloses a tympanum with a foundation inscription. This 10-line inscription gives the name and titles of the founder and the date of foundation; includes an appropriate Qurʾanic inscription (Qur'an: XVIII, 29) about the reward that awaits those who perform good deeds; and specifies that the madrasa is intended for the four Sunni *madhhab*s. A much longer and larger inscription band on the river side remains but has been largely redone during the reign of the Ottoman sultan ʿAbdülaziz in 1282 (1865). Extending for nearly 100 m, the inscription frieze stands above a series of ornamented blind niches with a shouldered arch, all reinforcing the idea that the madrasa was intended to be accessed from the Tigris by boat as well.

The interior of the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya is disposed around a perfectly regular courtyard, balanced on its short ends by tall and spacious iwans and in the middle of its long sides by the entrance iwan and the tripartite façade of the prayer hall, a straightforward but elegant adaptation of the four-iwan plan that became standardized under the Seljuqs in Iran. All these four focal points are flanked by two levels of superimposed pointed arches that lead to rectangular rooms, totaling 36 on each floor, although at least six of these spaces also accommodated staircases linking the two floors. Vaulted corridors on the upper level extend on both sides of the iwans and the prayer hall, providing access to the upper chambers while also reducing their size by about one-fifth. The lower rooms, which are larger and more easily accessible, were most likely intended for teachers, while the upper ones were probably for students. Beyond its courtyard, the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya contained on its northwestern side a warren of rooms that may have been the hospital (*bimaristan*) (Mashhadani and al-Naqshbandi 1986: 77–79). Also on this side there are the remains of an iwan that adorses the internal iwan and that may have once faced a garden that would have extended to the *masnat* (breakwater) known to have existed there. The chambers on the opposite, northeastern side of the madrasa are larger, better organized, and more accessible through two openings in corners of the courtyard that lead to a tall, narrow vaulted corridor that extends the full width of the structure. Covered by sail vaults with a central skylight, these seven spacious chambers are generally identified in the secondary literature with the library, scriptorium, and study halls (Mashhadani and al-Naqshbandi 1986: 97–109).

An architectural and photogrammetric survey of the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya by Hansjorg Schmid fully documents the existing form of the building and demonstrates that the structure was built according to sophisticated rules of geometric planning and harmonic proportions. In terms of the ground plan, Schmid uncovered the foot measure that may have been used in designing the structure (30 cm), demonstrating that, with fairly minor adjustments, the plan was generated as whole number multiples of this foot unit, such that, for example, the width of the mosque was 80 feet and that of the two main iwans 30 feet. Applying this unit measure to the elevations of the courtyard units, the profiles of their arches, and the vaulting of the ancillary units, Schmid proposed that these measurements were equally based on whole or fractional multiples of the same foot measure. The precision of the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya's geometric planning is well attested in Iranian brick-built monuments, ranging from the Seljuq to the Timurid periods and beyond (Golombek and Wilber 1988: 37–59).

Secular Architecture: The Abbasid Palace

When Herzfeld examined the so-called Abbasid Palace in the early twentieth century, he simply referred to it as Iwan al-Qalʿah (Iwan of the Castle), since only an iwan facing an irregular cruciform courtyard seems to have remained from the original structure. The northern side of this courtyard was occupied by a longitudinal structure covered by six small domes, suggesting an Ottoman building. Several episodes of excavation, restoration, and rebuilding between 1933 and *c.* 1970 have uncovered other important wings of this building. Curiously, these archaeological efforts have failed to uncover any epigraphic evidence that would ascertain the name and date of the "Abbasid Palace," an appellation that has been disputed by several scholars who have identified it instead as a madrasa, specifically al-Madrasah al-Sharabiyya. For the sake of clarity, this chapter will accept the original identification of this monument as a palace before addressing in the conclusion those arguments that have identified it as a madrasa.

The Abbasid Palace is a two-story brick structure situated on the Tigris River at the western corner of the city wall, in what would have been the citadel of the city and later the Ottoman governor's palace. A nearly square structure centered around a square courtyard, the palace is entered through a rather inconsequential portal on its eastern side and an impressive but largely rebuilt portal on the southern side, which faces the Tigris. With its rabbeted convex moldings, a low doorway surmounted by a much taller arch, and a panel for inscription in the tympanum, the portal was clearly rebuilt after the model of the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya's portal. Its rebuilt status notwithstanding, this was undoubtedly the main original entrance to the palace, a conclusion ascertained by the well-preserved vestibule to which it leads. This vestibule, in turn, takes to two bent-axis passages, the western into the corner of the courtyard and the eastern to a long corridor that connects a series of independent rooms.

The square courtyard is dominated on its eastern courtyard by a large iwan whose keel-shaped pointed arch is double the height of the chambers that flank it and that surround the courtyard on three sides. Arranged on two levels, the approximately 40 chambers are fronted by a double arcade resting on square piers, behind which runs a narrow corridor. Facing the iwan is a spacious rectangular chamber (13.8 × 4.5 m), which could be read as a mosque, were it not for its incorrect orientation and the absence of a mihrab niche in its long wall.

Although heavily restored, there is little question that the Abbasid Palace was thoroughly decorated, in the grand style of al-Mustansiriyya, with geometric strapwork and minutely carved brick arabesque ornament, in addition to magnificent *muqarnas* vaulting. The best preserved passages of original ornament are found in the vestibule, the vaulting of the iwan, and especially the vaulting of the eastern corridor, while all other parts of the structure have been rebuilt and decorated in a similar style. Upon entering the vestibule, one is immediately struck by its fine and opulent ornament, which builds up in a series of carved *muqarnas* cells that support a flat ceiling, a splendid masterpiece of carved brick decoration. Interlocking eight-pointed stars alternating with swastikas form the basic design, which is further embellished by carving minute arabesque and geometric patterns in every cell and even along the ribs of the strapwork, creating a uniquely rich and tactile effect.

The tall and spacious iwan (5 × 8.5 × 9.15 m) is framed by a rabbeted pointed arch which is itself enclosed within a rectangular frame. The exterior ornament is all recent restoration, but original ornamental passages remain on the tympanum and especially the vault of the iwan, whose two halves are symmetrically decorated in geometric patterns whose cells are carved in minute arabesque patterns. The design emanates from a circular acanthus whirl surrounded by a ring with 16 raised bosses and ends in four arrow-shaped medallions, a carpet-like composition that imparts a sense of order and rigor to the intervening geometric ornament.

Even more stunning is the vaulting of the eastern corridor, which effectively consists of a series of interlocked small *muqarnas* vaults that rise as large corbeled cells from the piers surrounding the courtyard and from the inner wall and end each in an eight-pointed star. Each cell is minutely decorated in arabesque ornament, producing an exquisitely tactile design. Although *muqarnas* vaulting had become commonplace throughout the Islamic world by the first half of the thirteenth century, this *muqarnas*-vaulted corridor appears without parallel and once again points to the excellence and originality of late Abbasid architecture and ornament (Figure 12.4) (Tabbaa 2001: 123–124).

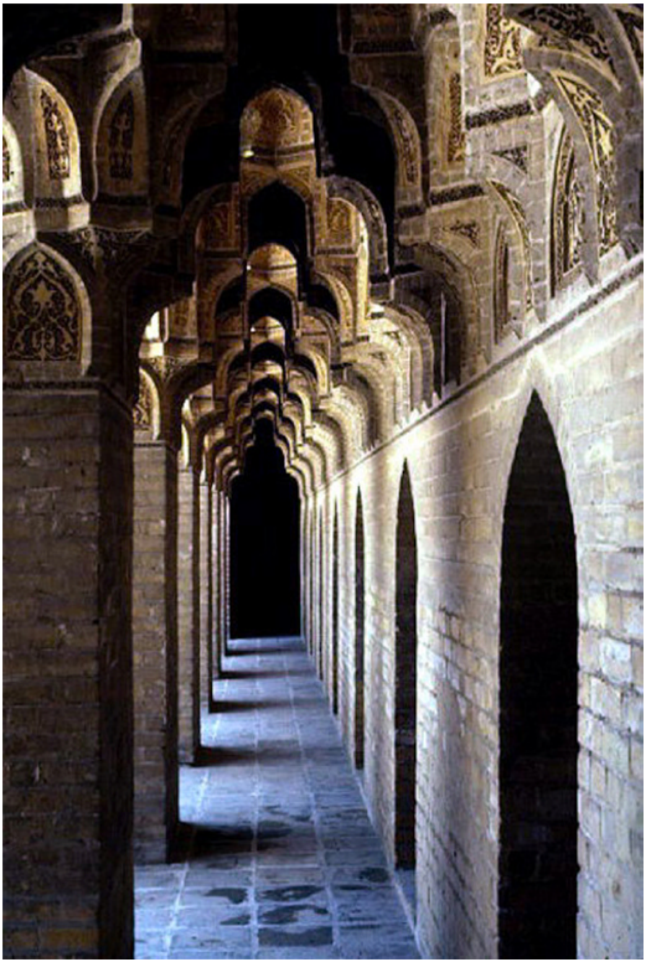

Figure 12.4 Baghdad: Abbasid Palace, *c.* 1200, corridor with *muqarnas* vaulting. Source: Yasser Tabbaa. Reproduced with permission.

Most scholars have dated this structure on stylistic grounds to the period of either al-Nasir or al-Mustansir, but many have rejected its original function as a palace, proposing that it was originally a madrasa, specifically the Madrasa al-Sharabiyya.[9] Arguing for its origin as a madrasa are its stylistic similarities to Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya and the large number of side rooms on two levels, normally used to house students. But there are more compelling reasons to argue for a palatial origin. First, the name in itself is quite curious for, to my knowledge, there is not a single madrasa that has been renamed a palace. Second, the location of the Abbasid Palace within the Baghdad citadel precinct, and mainly accessible from the riverside, seem to argue for a palace rather than a madrasa. Third, the historical sources are completely silent about this alleged madrasa: they do not specify a madrasa in this location; they say nothing about its caliphal inauguration; and most seriously, they do not offer the usual list of teachers who have taught in this institution. Alternatively, there is a handful of historical sources that mention a so-called Dar al-Masnat (House by the Breakwater) at the citadel, built by al-Nasir *c.* 580 (1184).[10] This could very well be the Abbasid Palace, begun by al-Nasir and completed by al-Mustansir.

There are also some ambiguities and absences in the architecture of this building that seriously undermine its designation as a madrasa, including its incorrect orientation to the qibla by around 30°, the absence of a concave mihrab in its alleged mosque, and its entry from the riverside rather than the city. Furthermore, the entire building, is anepigraphic, lacking a foundation inscription, Qur'anic passages, and later inscriptions of rebuilding or *waqf* (endowment) augmentation, which is very unusual for a prestigious madrasa such as this one.

Even the close architectural affinities between the Abbasid Palace and the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya do not conclusively argue for such an identification since medieval madrasas and palaces are often typologically related (see Robinson, CHAPTER 28). Thus, the Abbasid Palace was most likely a palace that was built either by al-Nasir or al-Mustansir, a re-identification that potentially contributes to our incomplete understanding of the typology of medieval Islamic palaces.

The Arts of the Book during the Late Baghdad Caliphate

No decorative arts in pottery, metalwork, glass, woodwork, or ivory can be securely attributed to late Abbasid Baghdad. As such, this discussion will focus solely on the arts of the book: calligraphy, which enjoyed a glorious career under the early and late Abbasids; and illustrated manuscripts, whose short-lived efflorescence closely parallels the architecture discussed above. Two Iraqi cities, Kufa and Baghdad, have largely shaped the course and trajectory of Islamic calligraphy between the eighth and thirteenth centuries – Kufa in the first three centuries and Baghdad from to the tenth to the thirteenth century and beyond (see George, CHAPTER 4). Much of this development predates the middle of the eleventh century, where this chapter begins, including the rise of Abbasid Kufic Qurʾanic calligraphy toward the end of the eighth century; the definitive reforms of Ibn Muqla at the beginning of the tenth century, that may have led to the development of the so-called New Style script (also known as Broken or Eastern Kufic); and the elegant resolution of these reforms at the hand of Ibn al-Bawwab at the eve of the eleventh century (Tabbaa 1991: 119–147). Having said that, there is little question that the legacy of these two calligraphers continued into the eleventh century, when Qurʾans were simultaneously written in the New Style script and increasingly in the more cursive scripts attributed to Ibn al-Bawwab, including *naskh* and *thuluth*, which were produced by the systematization of the cursive scripts of the Abbasid chancery.

Several eleventh-century Qurʾan manuscripts, written in Baghdad and in some Iranian cities, continue to be written in the semi-Kufic script, whose use for writing the Qurʾan should be attributed to Ibn Muqla. Written on paper with a vertical format, these rather modest Qurʾans generally employ an austere and closely packed script characterized by vertical uprights, angular ligatures, and somewhat triangular openings. Fully vocalized and with complete and consistent diacritical marks, the semi-Kufic script was intended to be read by any literate person, a striking difference from the earlier Kufic manuscripts.

Some eleventh-century Qurʾan manuscripts, starting with the unique extant Qurʾan dated 391/1000 and calligraphed by the celebrated Ibn al-Bawwab, are written in the new cursive styles that became dominant in the twelfth century. Generally speaking, the cursive Qurʾan manuscripts of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries show the closest affinities with Ibn al-Bawwab's robust *naskh* script for the text and his highly sinuous *thuluth* for the chapter headings. Typically, these manuscripts begin with a decorative single or double frontispiece of plaited or geometric ornament that includes a count of the chapters, verses, and sometimes words of the Qurʾan, and end with a colophon naming the calligrapher and the date and place of production. For example, Chester Beatty Library 1430 – a complete Qurʾan manuscript dated 428 (1037), most likely produced in Iraq – and TIEM (Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi) dated 449 (1057) – also a complete Qurʾan attributed to Baghdad and falsely signed in the name of Ibn al-Bawwab – steer very closely to the master calligrapher's *naskh* calligraphy (Rice 1955).

Qurʾan manuscripts produced in Baghdad and further east in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries continue some earlier calligraphic practices but become considerably larger and more lavishly decorated. The best known calligrapher of this period is the legendary Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi (1221–1298), whose career survived the disastrous end of the Abbasid caliphate and the murder of his patron, al-Mustaʿsim, for he continued to produce Qurʾans after the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258, and well into the period of the Ilkhans, who governed the city on behalf of the Mongols. According to the Iranian anthologist Qadi Ahmad (d. 1610), Yaqut, whom he calls "the cynosure of calligraphers," "followed the tradition of Ibn al-Bawwab, but in the trimming of the *qalam* and in the clipping of its nib he altered the manner of the earlier masters" (Qadi Ahmad 1959: 57–58). Cutting the nib at a characteristic angle made for a finer and more elegant cursive script, best seen in two of his Qurʾans written in the *rayhan* script with *thuluth* chapter headings. Yaqut is reputed to have written numerous copies of the Qurʾan, and a handful of these have survived, along with fragments and calligraphic specimens signed by him (see Soucek, CHAPTER 5). He is said to have produced six famous calligraphers who spread his calligraphic method to Iran and Turkey, where it was perpetuated well into the sixteenth century.

Indeed, the unparalleled position held by Baghdad in the history of Islamic calligraphy should be augmented by the influence of its calligraphic innovations on epigraphy, specifically monumental inscriptions. In this regard, the *thuluth* of Ibn al-Bawwab – noted for its squat letter forms, compact lines, and the interconnections among normally unconnected letters – seems to have achieved an iconic status, for it is used in numerous buildings throughout the Islamic world from the late eleventh to the middle of the thirteenth century. Inscriptions from eleventh-century Ghazni and Isfahan, twelfth-century Syria and North Africa, and even thirteenth-century Aleppo and Mosul, attest both to the significance of Ibn al-Bawwab's calligraphy and, perhaps more importantly, to the desire of distant dynasties to appropriate it as a symbol of allegiance to the Abbasid caliphate (Tabbaa 1994: 119–148). It also seems likely that the calligraphic excellence achieved by Baghdadi calligraphers in the thirteenth century translated into the high quality of monumental inscriptions that we have seen on Baghdad's fortifications and on the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya, although more work needs to be done on this connection.

In addition to producing magnificent Qurʾans, Baghdad of the first half of the thirteenth century also stood at the vanguard of significant developments in manuscript illumination, including scientific manuscripts, such as those of late antique writers and their imitators, including Dioscorides and Pseudo-Galen; the fable book of *Kalila wa Dimna*; and particularly the *Maqamat* (Assemblies) of al-Hariri (d. 1122). Since this short-lived school of manuscript illumination achieves its most distinctive mode in the *Maqamat*, the following discussion will focus exclusively on this proto-narrative literary genre, which was first created in the early eleventh century by Badiʿ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani but achieved its greatest popularity in the early twelfth century in the *Maqamat* of al-Hariri (see also Contadini, CHAPTER 17). This work tells the peripatetic adventures of a roguish hero, Abu Zayd, as narrated by al-Harith, a slightly gullible merchant, but more than anything dwells on Abu Zayd's verbal virtuosity. An extremely popular book in its time – hundreds of copies are said to have been autographed by al-Hariri himself – the text does not seem to have been illustrated before the early thirteenth century, mainly in Baghdad but also in Syria and later Cairo as well.

One question still baffles: why was this rather impenetrable text with limited narration illustrated, and why did this happen in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, more than a century after the text had been written? Richard Ettinghausen, the first to identify a school of Arab painting, attributed the efflorescence of this painting tradition in the first half of the thirteenth century to the generally able and tranquil reign of caliphs al-Nasir and al-Mustansir (Ettinghausen 1962: 8). Oleg Grabar, examining the social context of the illustrated *Maqamat* of the thirteenth century, linked them with an "urban bourgeoisie" that, he argued, had developed in Baghdad and other contemporary cities (see Contadini, CHAPTER 17; Grabar 1970: 207–222). Alain George has reexamined the massive appeal of the *Maqamat* as a text that enjoyed widespread oral recitation, arguing that the style and format of both text and images were specifically intended to be listened to and seen by a seated audience. George also expanded on the picaresque element of the *Maqamat*, first proposed by Ettinghausen, highlighting its theatrical and comic elements (George 2012).

The compositional, stylistic, and iconographic features of the illustrated *Maqamat* are best examined through two famous thirteenth-century manuscripts of the text, Paris Bibliothèque nationale (arabe 5847), which is signed by its calligrapher and illustrator, Yahya b. Mahmud al-Wasiti, and dated to 634 (1237), and a copy in St. Petersburg (ms. S 23). Both were produced in Baghdad in the third and fourth decades of the thirteenth century, and both have generated a tremendous amount of interest among art historians, largely focusing on their stylistic sources, iconography, and social history. The two manuscripts share many compositional devices: high rate of illustration; unframed illustrations that are interspersed with the text; large figures placed at the edge of the picture plane; flat interior spaces with a tripartite architectural framework; exterior scenes with minimal indications of landscape; and occasional development of the picture plane as two or three strips on which figures and animals are placed. Stylistically, the two manuscripts are characterized by highly saturated opaque water colors that are sometimes variegated to resemble "watered silk"; animated figures that display a degree of emotional response; and a comic sensibility, often seen in the manner of interaction of figures with one another. Overall, the illustrated *Maqamat*, particularly these two manuscripts, depict satirical images of urban dwellers and the official class, giving us lively portraits of all aspects of life in a medieval Islamic city: travel, trials, banquets, parades, picnics, weddings, funerals, markets, and architecture.

While generally adhering to these compositional and stylistic features, the 1237 Hariri manuscript towers over all other Arab manuscripts by the quality of its paintings and their size (averaging 28 × 26 cm), the subtlety of its gestures, and the variety of its compositions. Its softer palette, vividly drawn racial types, and daring expansion of the picture plane contribute to more engaging pictures that not only illustrate the narrative but also create a tableau vivant of urban, agrarian, and pastoral life. Two paintings in particular – both illustrations of the thirty-ninth *maqama* – stand out for their strident originality in subject matter and composition. The so-called Hour of Birth shows a cross-section of a two-story house, of which the lower level is dominated by a corpulent woman giving birth, assisted by her daughter and a midwife, and the upper level shows the Indian master of the house, seated cross-legged and flanked by Abu Zayd and al-Harith, who are busy casting a horoscope for the newborn. Less jarring is a depiction of a magical island at which a boat has moored, resplendent with a griffin, a harpy, parrots, monkeys frolicking in trees, and fish swimming in a blue sea (Ettinghausen 1962: 121–122; Hillenbrand 2010: 117–134). It would be nearly an entire century until the Persianate painters of the Ilkhanid court progressed beyond the achievements of late Abbasid painting.

The Legacy of the Architecture and Arts of the Late Baghdad Caliphate

Despite its short duration and few surviving monuments, the architecture and the arts of the book of the late Abbasid caliphate resonated widely within the Islamic world and left a significant legacy for the succeeding Mongol dynasties of the Ilkhanids (1256–1353) and Jalayirids (1336–1432). Forms generated, refined, or monumentalized in late Abbasid Baghdad – including *muqarnas* vaulting, proportioned Qur'anic scripts, and cursive epigraphy – were widely adopted by the middle of the twelfth century in various regions of the Islamic world, including Almoravid North Africa, Zangid and Ayyubid Syria, and even late Seljuq Iran. Does the wide dissemination of these late Abbasid forms entail symbolic allegiance to the Abbasids; does it suggest the appropriation of symbolic forms that were linked with the Sunni revival; or can this process simply be explained in aesthetic terms, as the circulation of beautiful and wondrous forms among sophisticated patrons? Although aesthetic factors cannot be ignored, there are some indications that a few of these late Abbasid ornamental forms possessed a symbolic charge, and that their appropriation by various Islamic dynasties points to a symbolic reciprocal relationship between a center possessing the means of legitimation but lacking power and a periphery lacking legitimacy but possessing worldly power. As such, these "symbolic forms" would have ameliorated the sharp divide between the myth of Islamic unity and the reality of political fragmentation that prevailed in the last two centuries of the Abbasid caliphate (Tabbaa 2001: 163–164).

The vigor and resilience of late Abbasid architecture can also be demonstrated by its impressive continuity even after the Mongol conquest in 1258, as can be seen in the complex of the Madrasa al-Mirjaniyya and Khan Mirjan, built in 1357. The Khan Mirjan is quite unique, even among commercial buildings, in that its courtyard is completely covered by astonishing transverse vaulting, which is seen earlier in Sasanian architecture and later in the Ilkhanid period. Though built more than a century after the Madrasa al-Mustansiriyya, the Madrasa al-Mirjaniyya shows remarkable continuities with it, in terms of plan, ornament, and particularly a nearly identical monumental portal.

On the other hand, the Madrasa al-Mirjaniyya boasts four domes, of which the most prominent has an attenuated and fluted drum, a form that recalls later Central Asian architecture. The cross-fertilization of late Abbasid and Ilkhanid architecture, both in Iraq and Iran, presents interesting possibilities for further investigation.

Notes

1. See, for example, Makdisi 1973: 15–57. See also Tabbaa 2001: 14–21.
2. Hartmann 1975 and most recently Hanne 2007. Among al-Nasir's patronage of Shiʿi shrines are his construction of the shrine of Fatima al-Zahraʾ in Mecca in 604/1207–1208 (see RCEA X, No. 3632) and the even more strident rebuilding of Ghaybat al-Mahdi in the Samarra shrine in 606/1209 (see RCEA X, No. 3658).
3. The use of dragons as apotropaic emblems over military gates is quite well attested in a number of citadels, including Aleppo, Sinjar, and Mardin. For dragons in Islamic architecture, see Oney 1970 and Rabbat 2006.
4. Some of these palace names would resonate in later medieval Islamic palaces, including al-Firdaws, which is used for a thirteenth-century palace outside Mardin in southern Turkey, and especially al-Rayhan, which is one of the names of the Palace of the Myrtle at the Alhambra, Hispanicized as *Arrayanes*.
5. See, for example, Tabbaa 1983, pl. 4.
6. Hadithi and Khāliq 1974.
7. Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi, *Mirʾāt al-Zamān fi tawārīkh al-aʿyān* (Beirut, 2013), vol. 8, p. 739; Kamal al-Dīn Ibn al-Fuwati, *al-Hawādith al-jamiʿa waʾl-tajārub al-nāfiʿa fiʾl-miʿa al-sābiʿa*, ed. M. Jawad (Baghdad, 1932), vol. 3, 57–58. *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Travels in Asia and Africa 1325–1354*, tr. and ed. H.A.R. Gibb (London, 1929), 99. These sources are cited by Hisham Nashabe (1989: 73–75).
8. See Nashabe 1989: 140–159 for lists of teachers of various *madhhabs* and other professionals at the madrasa. See also al-Mashhadani and al-Naqshbandi 1986, esp. 97–138 for more extensive lists of students, librarians, and books.
9. Jawad 1945, where the author identifies it as a palace. Maʾrūf 1965 and Janabi 1982: 68–71 argued that it was a madrasa, an argument accepted by Hillenbrand (1994: 185, 223).
10. These include Ibn Jubayr (2001: 237), who describes the caliph al-Nasir arriving by boat to his palace at the upper end of the eastern bank of the Tigris; and Ibn al-Jawzī 2013: 57 for the events of the year 576/1180, where the author describes a palatial structure in the same location as "Dar Tatar" or "Dar al-Masnat," both earlier names for the Abbasid Palace.

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13

Turko-Persian Empires between Anatolia and India

Howard Crane and Lorenz Korn

The two centuries between the mid-eleventh and mid-thirteenth centuries represent a major turning point in the visual and architectural landscape of the eastern Islamic world. Indeed, they constitute in many ways one of the most formative and original moments in the history of Islamic art, during which the Iranian world, including Iraq and the newly conquered lands of Anatolia and north India, became major centers of innovation and experimentation (Sourdel-Thomine 1973).

Just why these changes took place is difficult to explain. It is noteworthy, however, that the period was one of striking political, social, ethnic, and religious change, which cannot but have had a profound impact on the visual culture of the eastern Islamic world. Politically, the period was one of decentralization in which the Abbasid caliphate fell into political decline and was displaced by numerous, effectively independent courts ruled by military aristocracies, many of which functioned as well as autonomous cultural centers did. Change was likely also catalyzed by the growing importance of new ethnic groups in the eastern Islamic world (Mashriq), in particular the newly Islamized Turks, who, by the eleventh century, had a dominant presence in the military courts of the region.

These political and ethnic changes were paralleled by an indigenous cultural revival in the Iranian world, expressed in the architecture of the period by the widespread use of various, often pre-Islamic, monumental forms, and an enormous expansion in patronage and creative experiment. Distinguishing characteristics include the appearance of the four-iwan plan and the *pishtaq* (monumental portal); the monumentalization of pre-existing functions such as the madrasa and caravanserai; the innovative use of a variety of media, such as

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"thousand weaves" (*hazar-baf*) patterned brick bonds and glazed tiles to enrich architectural façades; and elements of architectural decoration, such as *muqarnas* ("honeycomb" or "stalactite" vaulting), the split-leaf arabesque, and geometric star and polygon patterns (*girih*), that in time became hallmarks of "Islamic" architecture. The great paradox of this development was that in many ways the agency behind this revival was non-Persian, namely the Turkophone ruling elites of Turkic military courts.

While the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad retained their position of titular leadership, after 1055 effective political power came to be held by the Seljuqs, who posed as protectors of Sunni Islam and governed much of the area between 1038 and 1194. Although it is sometimes referred to as the Seljuq period, the eastern Islamic world was in fact divided among a number of powerful, for the most part Turkic, dynastic military states (Qarakhanid, Ghaznavid, Ghurid, Rum Seljuq, Artuqid, Zangid, Ayyubid, Shah-Arman, and so on), of which the Seljuqs of Iran were but one. Ultimately, at the end of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries much of this political infrastructure was swept away by a new power, the Turkic Khwarazmshahs, whose origins lay in the delta of the Amu Darya south of the Aral Sea and briefly came into control of an empire stretching from eastern Anatolia to the frontiers of India, only to be overwhelmed in turn by the Mongols in the years after 1220.

Survey of Scholarship and Key Issues

Architecture and Urbanism

Early scholarship on the architecture of the period often took the form of period nonspecific regional surveys such as those of Albert Gabriel (1931–1934), Ernst Diez (1918), and Ernst Cohn-Wiener (1930). For Iran, the (perhaps prematurely) comprehensive *Survey of Persian Art* project directed by Arthur Upham Pope went along with the exploration of buildings at the order of the Society for National Monuments (Pope and Ackerman 1977: vol. 3). A similar structure was characteristic of research in the Soviet Union, where regional expeditions for the documentation of monuments led to survey studies (summarized by Khmelnitskiy 1996; Hillenbrand 2011). Monuments in Syria were studied by orientalists like Jean Sauvaget and Ernst Herzfeld (Herzfeld 1954–1956), as well as architects like Michel Écochard, while the architecture of the Ayyubid period has been the subject of studies by Terry Allen (1996–1999), Yasser Tabbaa (1997), and Lorenz Korn (2004).

More recently, studies having to do with specific building types – madrasas, caravanserais, and so on – have appeared. Examples for Seljuq Anatolia (Rum) include the work of Aptullah Kuran (Kuran 1969), Kurt Erdmann (Erdmann 1971), and Scott Redford (Redford 1993a). In Iran, some buildings have been studied individually, while the Persian volumes of the *Ganjnameh* survey present a valuable documentation of different classes of buildings. Finally, more interpretative approaches have been taken by authors such as Janine Sourdel-Thomine, who analyzed formal development, function, and meaning in Iranian architecture of the Seljuq period (Sourdel-Thomine 1973, 1985); Yasser Tabbaa, who interpreted much of the artistic innovation of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as motivated by religious politics (Tabbaa 1997); and Gülru Necipoğlu, who traced the origin of geometric interlace ornament (*girih*) to scholars and craftsmen who were active in applied mathematics (Necipoğlu 1995: 131 ff.).

Craftsmen and Patrons

Studies of architectural patronage, based largely on epigraphy and occasional references in contemporary histories, have shed light on questions relating to the social and political backgrounds of patrons and issues of motivation, particularly in the thirteenth century. While both epigraphic and historical sources are plentiful for Anatolia (Rogers 1976) and Syria, they are more limited for Iran, and sparse for India. With regard to Anatolia, particular attention has been devoted to the activities of a number of high-court officials dating to the period of Mongol hegemony (Crane 1993), while with reference to India, an important study has been published on the patronage of an amir in the region of Bayana in Rajasthan (Shokoohy and Shokoohy 1987).

The architectural patronage of rulers in Syria, such as the Zangid ruler Nur al-Din (d. 1174), has been extensively studied. Its use as a means of self-representation, presenting Sunni rulers as champions of Islam (Tabbaa 1997) and of Sunni orthodoxy (though some Ayyubid rulers donated patronage to Shiʿi shrines as well) has been clearly established as a standard theme. Material is particularly abundant for the Ayyubid period, so that building activities and their sociopolitical contexts in Syria can be largely reconstructed, even where many buildings have vanished (Allen 1996–1999; Korn 2004; Tabbaa 1997). In the special case of Jerusalem, Ayyubid building politics were even more fraught with ideological matters, so that here the importance of place is more prominent than questions of typological and stylistic development (Hillenbrand and Auld 2009).

The value of *waqfiyya*s (foundation deeds) as sources for understanding the functioning and administration of pious foundations as well as the motivations behind their construction has gained increasing recognition over the years, and a fairly substantial number of thirteenth-century documents from Seljuq Anatolia have been published. In addition, craftsmen's names are occasionally included in foundation inscriptions on buildings, particularly in Anatolia. Even though they provide few details concerning the careers of these individuals, the names and *nisba*s (parts of names indicating places of origin) sometimes furnish valuable information about their backgrounds. The patronymic ʿAbd Allah of the architect Kaluk, whose name occurs in inscriptions on the İnce Minareli (1264) and Larende (1258) mosques and in the tomb of Nalıncı Baba in the Rum Seljuq capital Konya (*c.* 1260), for example, suggests a non-Muslim convert origin. The *nisba* al-Dimashqi (of Damascus) of the architect Muhammad ibn Khawlan, on the other hand, found on the façade of the Alaeddin Mosque in Konya (twelfth–thirteenth centuries) explains the Syrian style of its portal (Rogers 1976).

For Ayyubid Syria, some developments can be directly connected with individual artists. Through signatures in inscriptions and stylistic features, Terry Allen has followed the career of Qahir ibn ʿAli al-Sarmani from Aleppo to Damascus (Allen 1996–1999: chapter 11). On the basis of written sources, it is possible to make a connection between persons who practiced applied geometry, for example, in the production of both astrolabes and architecture. What this implies for the drawing of ground plans and elevations, however, remains to be explored (Allen 1996–1999: Appendix B).

In the absence of a rich historical epigraphy on Ghurid buildings of the Punjab and north India, recent scholarship has based conclusions relating to the origins of craftsmen on grounds of structure and architectural decoration, and shown that the local Islamic architectural tradition evolved out of a complex synthesis of Indian and east Iranian influences (Flood 2009; Patel 2004).

Techniques and Materials

In Syria, Seljuq Anatolia, and Ghurid north India the primary building material was drafted stone, and relief carved stone was the most prevalent medium for the decoration of architectural surfaces. In Iran and Iraq, brick prevailed as construction material and was also used to decorate buildings with patterns in flat bonding or in relief. Mud brick and pisé were also used, particularly for massive walls. To the west, the use of brick extended as far as Balis and al-Raqqa on the Euphrates. Glazed tile was widely used for decorative purposes in Anatolian and Iranian Seljuq buildings, where cut tile, two-colored glaze, *minaʾi*, and luster techniques are all represented. While craftsmen in Anatolia were early in experimenting with a wide range of techniques, monuments in Iran demonstrate the gradual expansion in the use of glazed tile from the early twelfth century onwards. Glazed tile is all but absent in the Indus Valley and north India until the post-Mongol era, emerging there at the very end of the thirteenth century. In Ayyubid Syria, colored marble inlay, used to decorate mihrabs and portals, became a hallmark of workshops from Aleppo. From there it spread to Damascus and finally to Anatolia where it was used in combination with tilework.

Stucco, as a technique traditionally at home east of the Euphrates, was brought to brilliant effect in the decoration of Seljuq Iranian architecture, and in many cases focused on mihrabs, but also as a decoration of whole interior spaces (Korn 2012; Shani 1996). In Anatolia, though only a few fragments of stucco have come to light in the Seljuq palaces, such as the Köşk (Kiosk, or Pavilion) of Konya, Kubadabad, and Felekabad, its use was probably more widespread (Redford 1993a).

The large-scale use of spolia in Seljuq period monuments, in particular in Anatolia and north India, has given rise to varied explanations ranging from their incorporation serving as symbolic appropriations signifying the triumph of Islam to interpretations that emphasize opportunism and the practicality of using stone or brick that had already been quarried and drafted (Redford 1993b; Patel 2004). In Syria and northern Mesopotamia, the use of spolia and the copying of some elements of architectural decoration from classical antiquity has been interpreted either as a meaningful reference to the past, as an evidence of a continuous and conservative tradition of stoneworking in these regions, or even as a product of the talismanic value ascribed to them (Allen 1986; Gonnella 2010; Raby 2004).

Greater Iran (Iran and Iraq, Transoxania, Afghanistan)

For the architecture of Iran during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the terms "Ghaznavid" and "Seljuq" have been widely used, although other dynasties like the Karakhanids of Transoxiana, the Ghurids of present-day Afghanistan, the Kakuyids, the Atabegs and so on of western Iran can be credited with large shares of patronage. Decisive steps in the evolution of the Iranian mosque were taken under Seljuq reign, at the order of sultans and viziers. The transformation of the Great Mosque of Isfahan, between *c.* 1085 and *c.* 1125, set an example for the redesigning of hypostyle mosques to complex, multipartite mosques with large domes above the area in front of the mihrab (Figure 13.1), and with *iwan*s in the middle axes of the courtyard (Galdieri 1973–1984; Grabar 1990). The reasons for this revolution in the spatial layout, departing from the so-called Arab hypostyle plan, are still debated. Yet, the term *maqsura*, used to denote the domed hall in a few cases, points to a relationship between architecture and the (intended) presence of the ruler in Friday prayer, thereby reinterpreting earlier models of domes preceding the mihrab, like those of Damascus (715), Qayrawan (ninth century), and Cordoba (eighth through tenth centuries), although none of these served as a direct inspiration for Isfahan. Dimensions of the dome halls vary between 5 and 15 m in diameter, while the diameter/height ratio varies around 1:2. Particular features can be seen in the transitional zone between the square and the cupola: the two domes in the Great Mosque of Isfahan and other mosques in the Isfahan region (Barsiyan, 1104–1105; Ardistan, 1158–1160, and Zavara, 1156?) use tripartite squinches with pointed cells of large format, whereas the Great Mosque of Qazvin (1106–1114) and mosques in the wider region of Qazvin feature squinches with smooth, curved flanks. A novel design was the squinch filled with rows of *muqarnas* cells, realized for the first time in Gulpaygan (1114–1115; Korn 2012) but prefigured in the *muqarnas* niche of the mihrab of the mosque at Barsiyan.

The dome hall in front of the mihrab, together with the *iwan* courtyard, became a standard for the type of the great mosque in western and central Iran, to be

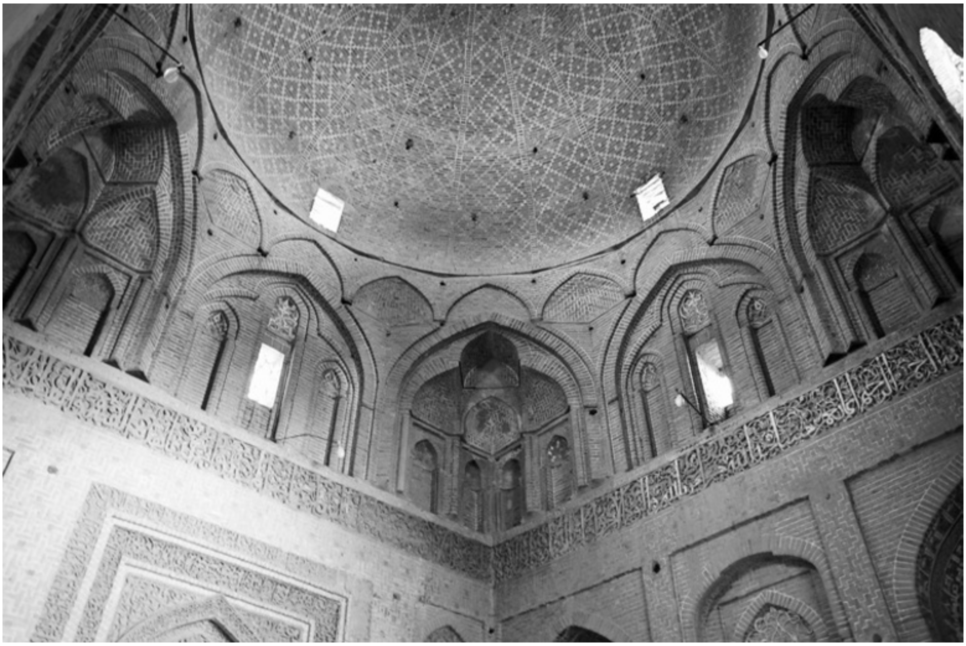

Figure 13.1 Ardistan (Iran), Great Mosque, dome hall, 1158. Source: Lorenz Korn. Reproduced with permission.

transferred to other regions of Iran and Central Asia during later periods, while it never became a standard form in Anatolia or India. In eastern Iran (Khurasan), the prevailing type of the great mosque during the Seljuq period had only two iwans opposite each other on the central axis of the mosque, and no dome chamber. Examples can be seen in the great mosques of Gunabad, Firdaus, and Farumad (early thirteenth century). It should be noted that, apart from the great mosques (i.e., Friday mosques), others (where the Friday *khutba* or sermon was not pronounced) were also erected. These were smaller in size and followed a variety of types, from oblong to square in plan and roofed with vaults or with a single dome. The Mosque of Sangan-i Pa'in in Khurasan (1137) is an example of the latter.

The emergence of the madrasa as a distinct building type should also be dated to the Seljuq period, although the surviving evidence is scanty. The madrasa built by a female patron at Shah-i Mashhad in present-day Afghanistan (1175–1176) has a richly decorated façade, in which the portal niche occupies the central position. Vaulted and domed rooms, as well as one or more iwans were arranged around the courtyard and formed a square plan of *c*. 44 × 44 m (Casimir and Glatzer 1971; Hillenbrand 2000: 136). More can be said about the madrasa at Zuzan in Khurasan, built for the teaching of Sunni Hanafi law in 1218 and inspired by the monuments erected by the Ghurid sultans in

Afghanistan. Its rectangular courtyard terminates in two deep *iwan*s, the façades of which were richly decorated with glazed and unglazed terracotta. The qibla *iwan* had lateral galleries on the first floor and a pointed barrel vault more than 20 m high, while the *iwan* opposite terminates in a large *muqarnas* niche (Blair 1985). It seems that the building type of the courtyard, surrounded by iwans and small rooms, was established as a standard model for the madrasa. However, the type was apparently flexible enough to be adapted to different conditions, as can be seen in the large madrasa built in 1227 in Baghdad at the order of caliph al-Mustansir (Schmid 1980). Here, the oblong courtyard (62.5 × 26.5 m) is surrounded by small cells. Their access is given through arcades, with a gallery on the upper floor, while the large pointed arches of *iwan*s and of the prayer hall, with their rectangular *pishtaq*s, occupy the full height of the courtyard façades. It is likely that the large closed halls on the southeastern side of the building, rather than the courtyard *iwan*s, were used for teaching, while the *iwan* open to the outside on the northwest could have been used for medical treatment. From the example of al-Mustansiriyya, it appears that the four-*iwan* scheme should not be considered a binding model of fixed shape, tied to the four Sunni legal schools (see Tabba, CHAPTER 12).

Minarets became an important part of urban architecture in Iran and central Asia during the Seljuq period. Continuing the tradition of early eleventh-century minarets, single towers were erected, usually with a circular plan, sometimes on an octagonal basis, though most minarets were attached to or sited nearby mosques. The minarets of Chihil Dukhtaran in Isfahan (1107–1108) and of Sin near Isfahan (1132) are typical, with their slender shafts of *c.* 30 m height and a diameter of *c.* 3 m at the basis. The loftiest minaret of the period was the tower of Jam in central Afghanistan, erected under the Ghurid sultan Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad b. Sam (1174–1175; Sourdel-Thomine 2004). Usually, the shafts of minarets are decorated with brick patterns, including inscriptions. The famous minaret of Bukhara (1127; Figure 13.2) represents a different type of a more squat but monumental appearance. With tapering shaft and conical lantern, it forms a landmark in the center of the city, and its design has been repeated in smaller dimensions in later minarets. The tower of Jar Kurgan (1108–1109; Khmelnitskiy 1996: I, 142 ff.), shaped like a bundle of 16 half-round rods, appears typologically related to the towers of Masʿud II and of Bahramshah at Ghazni (twelfth century), which were built on a star-shaped plan, with an elaborate decoration of terracotta relief. Quotations of Qurʾanic passages and of the call to prayer, inscribed on the towers of Jar Kurgan and Jam, point to their function as minarets in close connection with ritual prayer; in the case of Jam, the site of an adjacent mosque has recently been identified.

The mausoleum, a building type long established in Islamic culture by the period in question and rooted in pre-Islamic traditions of funerary architecture, took the form of domed squares or tower-like structures with pyramidal or

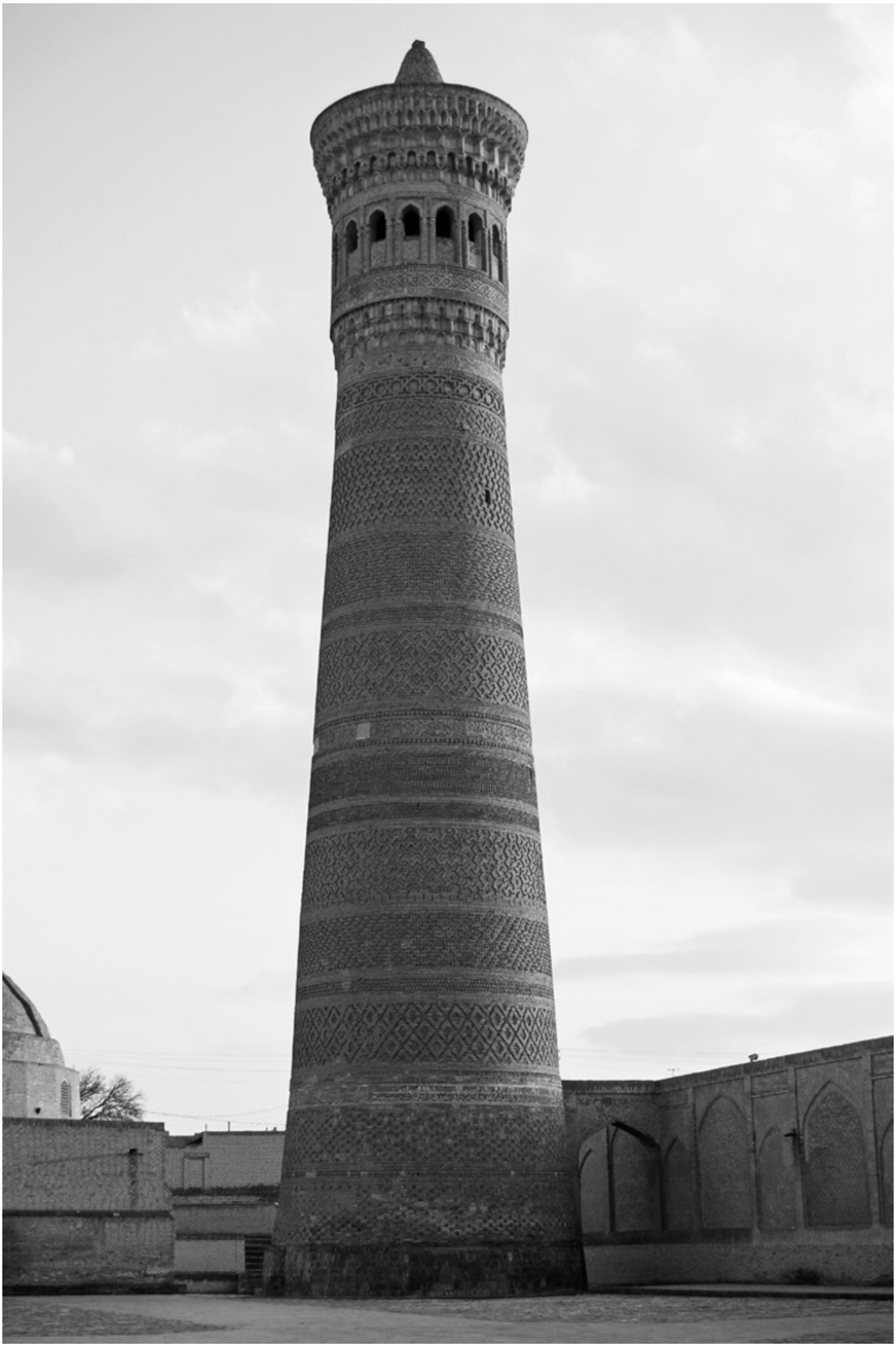

Figure 13.2 Bukhara (Uzbekistan), Great Mosque, minaret, 1127. Source: Lorenz Korn. Reproduced with permission.

conical roofing, generally referred to as tomb towers (Leisten 1998). The separation between an upper hall and an underground burial chamber was frequent but not essential. In central Asia, mausolea were frequently built with a true façade in the shape of a *pishtaq* that covers the largest part of the building behind. A group of three twelfth-century mausolea at Uzgend in the Ferghana valley (Kirgistan), which were built contiguous to each other, is an impressive example of façade decoration with deep niches framed by brick ornament and elegant inscriptions. By contrast, mausolea in central and western Iran were usually designed as freestanding monuments with rather equal sides, even if the entrance was highlighted with additional architectural elements and decoration. The two octagonal mausolea of Kharraqan (1067–1068 and 1093–1094) with their domes constructed as double shells demonstrate that the silhouette of the exterior was conceived independently from the shape of the interior. The mausoleum of the last Seljuq ruler of Khurasan, Sultan Sanjar (d. 1157) in Merv, with its dome measuring more than 15 m in diameter, was the most monumental formulation of this type (Hillenbrand 2011: 295–303), later emulated and further monumentalized by the Mongol Ilkhanids in the tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya with its double-shell dome.

Compared to religious architecture, little has remained of secular buildings. At Lashkari Bazar in Afghanistan (Schlumberger and Sourdel-Thomine 1978), a group of garden palaces and a large representative complex overlooking the Helmand River formed the winter residence of the Ghaznavid sultans. The large complex featured an entrance block with a vestibule and several other rooms, followed by the elongated central courtyard with four *iwan*s. The axial *iwan* opposite the entrance led into a square room, behind which an exterior *iwan* opened to give a view across the river. Mud-brick walls articulated with blind niches dominate the appearance of the ruin, but the excavations yielded rich evidence of architectural decoration, with stucco panels and figural wall paintings. A similar palace complex, with rich marble decoration, was excavated at Ghazni, also in Afghanistan (Bombaci 1966).

Caravanserais were built on overland trade routes in order to provide safe resting places for merchants and pack animals. The spacious courtyard complexes were surrounded by vaulted rooms. In eastern Iran, the caravanserai of Ribat-i Sharaf has been preserved. It consists of two courtyards arranged on the same axis. The *pishtaq*s of the gates and of the iwans, as well as some of the vaulted rooms in the wings, are richly decorated with brick patterns and stucco relief. While the building was probably constructed in 1114–1115, the decoration was only applied in 1154–1155, at the order of the wife of Sultan Sanjar, one of numerous female patrons active in the eastern Islamic world at this period. It seems that this caravanserai served also as a royal staging post on the route between Merv and Nishapur, the two most prosperous cities of Khurasan.

Anatolia

Islamic architecture in Anatolia from the victory of the Seljuq sultan Alp Arslan over the Byzantine emperor at Malazgird (Manzikert) in 1071 to the end of the thirteenth century is generally incorporated under the rubric of Seljuq architecture. However, a substantial portion of the buildings dating to the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries are attributable to the Turkmen principalities that ruled much of the Anatolian political landscape in the period. In the last decades of the twelfth and early years of the thirteenth century, however, through a series of wars and dynastic marriages, the Seljuqs of Rum (Anatolia), a collateral branch of the Great Seljuqs of Iran that had its capital in Konya, succeeded in incorporating many of these disparate territories as well as upper Mesopotamia south of Lake Van under their rule.

A key distinguishing feature of Rum Seljuq architecture is its eclecticism. Indigenous Byzantine, Armenian, and Georgian techniques and forms were synthesized with typologies and forms derived from Iran, Syria, Iraq, and central Asia to create a distinctive building style, primarily in stone. Building activity was generally modest through most of the twelfth century. In the decades of increased prosperity following the unification of central and eastern Anatolia by the sultans of Konya during the early thirteenth century, there was a significant increase in both the pace and scale of building activity. Although many of the most ambitious ensembles (the Alaeddin Mosque in Konya, the Huand Hatun complex in Kayseri, the Sultan Khans (royal caravanserais) on the Konya–Aqsaray and Kayseri–Sivas roads) are the result of royal patronage, the majority of buildings, including mosques, madrasas, tombs, and secular structures, as well as military architecture, were the work of members of the military-bureaucratic elite (Crane 1993).

With the imposition of the Mongol-Ilkhanid protectorate after 1243, however, royal patronage came to an abrupt and almost total halt. Nonetheless, powerful Seljuq amirs, acting as agents of the Mongols, continued to lavish resources on ambitious building projects as late as the seventh and eighth decades of the century despite the general impoverishment of the Seljuq lands owing to Mongol exactions (Beyazıt 2012).

Architectural façades are generally plain and sparsely decorated. Ornament is concentrated around portals and windows, and on the interiors of mosques or mihrabs. Techniques include relief-carved stone, *hazar-baf* brickwork, glazed tile (for the most part cut tile, only rarely luster and *mina᾽i* tiles), as well as, stucco and painting (little of which has survived, however). Both tile and stucco decoration were probably the work of Iranian craftsmen, many of whom immigrated to Anatolia in the decades following 1220, seeking commissions and refuge from the Mongols. Decorative motifs derive from a variety of sources: Iranian, Syrian, Georgian, Armenian, Byzantine, and occasionally Turkic (Pancaroğlu 2009: 184 ff.). Common motifs include bands of interlocking stars and polygons, abstract vegetal forms, and elaborate epigraphic compositions, sometimes accompanied by figural designs.

With the exception of tombs, Seljuq period architecture in Anatolia is characterized by horizontal massing with only occasional domes or conical-roofed lantern towers breaking the overall horizontality. Exterior façades are generally mural and function as screens enclosing the interior architecture of the building. Walls are massive and fenestration is minimal. Structure is generally arcuated, though trabeate solutions are employed as well. Vaults and domes display a remarkable variety and inventiveness. Zones of transition to domical vaults are fashioned of squinches, pendentives, or belts of prismatic consoles. Although monumental structures generally stand in isolation, they are occasionally grouped to form building complexes.

Mosques can be classified broadly in terms of plan into three groups: hypostyle, basilical, and the single-domed square. It is noteworthy that despite the prestige enjoyed by Iranian cultural norms, not a single example of an Iranian type four-iwan mosque is to be found in Anatolia. The earliest type was probably the hypostyle mosque, the architectural origins of which are to be found in Syria. Examples include the Great Mosque of Sivas (1197), characterized by a shallow rectangular prayer hall of cut stone divided into 11 aisles by 10 arcades carried on heavy stone piers supporting a flat timber and earthen roof (Gabriel 1931–1934: II, 143–146), and the eastern wing of the prayer hall of the Alaeddin mosque in Konya, probably dating to the rebuilding program of Sultan ʿAlaʾ al-Din Kayqubad I (r. 1219–1237; Redford 1991). Constructed of stone ashlars, it has a trapezoidal plan and incorporates numerous Roman and Middle Byzantine spolia. As a variation on the hypostyle type, it has a broad central aisle with a small atrium court and culminates with a domed bay before the mihrab. Outstanding examples include the Great Mosque of Divriği (1228–1229; Pancaroğlu 2009) and the Huand Hatun Mosque in Kayseri (1237–1238; Gabriel 1931–1934: I, 39–51), wife of ʿAlaʾ al-Din Kayqubad. Both funerary mosques belong to multifunctional building complexes, including commemorative, educational, and medical structures, early examples of which appear in Anatolia and Syria in this period.

The basilical mosque, doubtless inspired by Byzantine and Armenian church architecture, has antecedents that date back to the twelfth century. A modest but well-preserved early example is the Kale Mosque (1180–1181; Gabriel 1931–1934: II, 172–174) located in the fortress of Divriği. An outstanding example from the thirteenth century is the Alaeddin Mosque of Niğde (1223; Gabriel 1931–1934: I, 117–122), with a central bay in the form of an atrium court and three domed bays along the qibla wall.

A third type of mosque consists of a simple square prayer hall covered by a single dome, sometimes preceded by an arcaded portico covered by domes or vaults, or by a closed vestibule. Because of its small dimensions, this type of mosque was not intended for Friday congregational worship. Although particularly associated with the capital Konya (e.g., the Şekerfuruş Mosque, 1220, and Sırçalı Mosque, third quarter of the thirteenth century), examples are to be found in other central Anatolian towns as well (Dilaver 1970–1971). In a few instances (e.g., the İnce

Minareli Mosque, *c*. 1264, in Konya) towering brick minarets, overwhelming the scale of these small mosques to which they are attached, were appended to them in the manner of the Ghurid Minaret of Jam (Figure 13.3).

Twelfth- and thirteenth-century Anatolian madrasas and hospitals conform to two basic types, those with open courts, which derive conceptually from Iranian and Iraqi models such as the Mustansiriyya in Baghdad (1234); and a uniquely Anatolian type, characterized by a central court covered by a domical vault. The closed court type appears earlier, the earliest examples being the Danishmendid Yağıbasan Madrasa in Niksar (1157–1158) and the Çukur Madrasa in Tokat (mid-twelfth century; Kuran 1969: 11–20). Thirteenth-century examples include the four-iwan hospital of the queen Turan Malik in Divriği (1228; Pancaroğlu 2009) and the spectacular Karatay (1251–1252) and İnce Minareli (*c*. 1265; Figure 13.3) madrasas in Konya (Kuran 1969: 51–54), with courtyards covered by great hemispherical brick domes on fan pendentives, single *iwan*s, and flanking student cells. The former madrasa is noteworthy for the extraordinary veneering of its interior with cut and *mina'i* tiles, the latter for its dramatic, relief-carved stone portal.

The earliest open court madrasas date from the first years of the thirteenth century. With plans incorporating either two or four axial *iwan*s and student cells arranged along the sides of the courtyard, they are larger in scale than the closed court type and are sometimes characterized by splendid relief-carved portals flanked by pairs of brick minarets in the Iranian manner (Çifte Minareli Madrasa, Erzurum, *c*. second half of the thirteenth century; Gök Madrasa, Sivas, 1271; Rogers 1965). Given that the Mongol governors of Anatolia were now based in towns such as Erzurum and Sivas, rather than Konya, it is likely that both were inspired by Mongol-Ilkhanid prototypes in western Iran. It was not uncommon for the tomb of the founder to be incorporated within or contiguous to both closed and open court madrasas.

The most common function represented in the repertoire of Anatolian Seljuq architecture is commemoration. The earliest tombs date to the second half of the twelfth century. However, they become particularly common in the first three-quarters of the thirteenth century, with the most spectacular examples dating to the period of the Mongol protectorate. In terms of morphology, the vast majority derive from the Iranian canopy and tower type tombs. Built of stone or brick, they typically have two stories, an elevated oratory, and a semi-subterranean crypt, entered through separate doors. Oratories housed the often elaborate cenotaphs of the deceased, while the crypt functioned as the actual burial chamber. Façades and oratory portals are generally enriched with elaborate programs of relief carving.

The tower tomb is by far the more common of the two types. Typically it has a square crypt with beveled corners on top of which sits the circular or polygonal oratory, covered in the interior with a dome and on the exterior with a conical or polyhedral cap (a variant of the double-shell dome). Examples include the richly carved dodecagonal Döner Kümbet in Kayseri (*c*. 1275), the octagonal Çifte Kümbet in Kayseri (1247), and the spectacular Ulu Kümbet (*c*. 1275) at Ahlat on Lake Van.

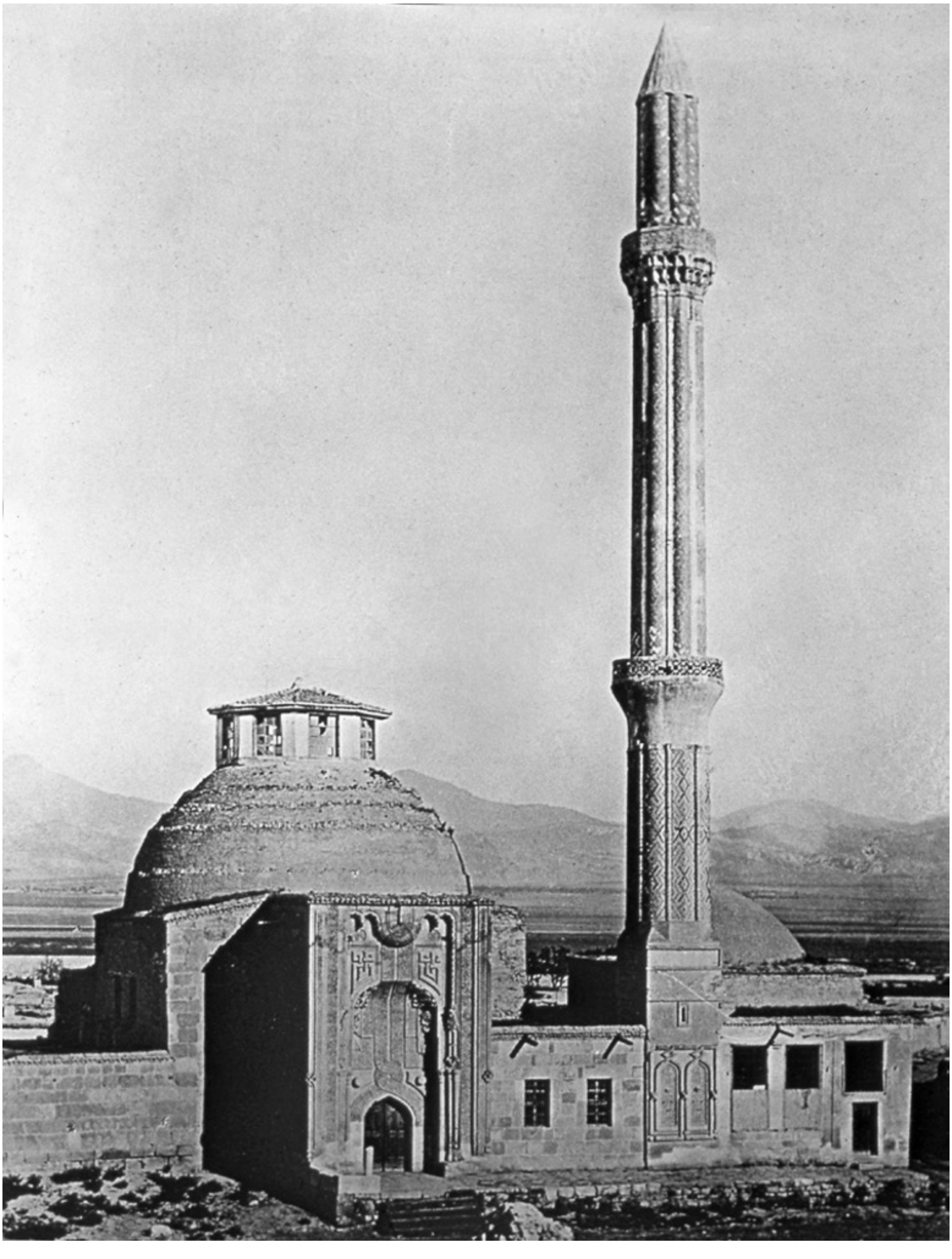

Figure 13.3 İnce Minareli closed court madrasa and mosque, Konya, *c.* 1265 (before collapse of minaret in 1901). Source: photographer unknown, from a postcard dated 1900.

Canopy tombs are much less common in Anatolia. The simplest examples, such as the tomb of Şeyh Aliman (1288) in Konya, consist of a squat cubic oratory covered by brick domes on squinches or prismatic consoles or, in the case of the Alaca Künbet in Kayseri (*c.* last quarter of the thirteenth century), by an octahedron.

Finally, a uniquely Anatolian Seljuq group of mausolea known as iwan tombs, found for the most part in central Anatolia, are rectangular in plan, with both the crypt and oratory covered by barrel vaults. The principal façade of the oratory is left open at one end to form an iwan. Early examples date to the twelfth century. Particularly noteworthy examples include the tombs of Emir Yavtaş (*c.* 1250) in the village of Reis in Akşehir province and of Gömeç Hatun (last quarter of the thirteenth century) in Konya (Bates 1970: 45–49, 95–98, 137–140, 146–154, 327–331).

Secular buildings include caravanserais, fortifications, baths, and palaces. A remarkable series of more than 100 stone caravanserais were built along the main commercial routes in Anatolia during the first seven decades of the thirteenth century (Erdmann 1971). They were no doubt intended to catalyze the growing commercial prosperity of the Rum Seljuq state in the decades following the conquest of the Mediterranean and Black Sea ports and, as a group, are among the most impressive monuments of the period. They are noteworthy for their large scale, fine stone construction, and often lavish decoration.

At least eight can be attributed to the Seljuq sultans, and members of the royal family built several others. However, the great majority was founded by members of the military-bureaucratic elite and their placement at regular stages along the main commercial routes suggests that they were part of an overall planning scheme. Morphologically, they derive from Syrian, Iranian, and central Asian prototypes. The least ambitious examples, found for the most part in central Anatolia, are apparently of local design, and consist of rectangular stone halls with interiors divided into aisles by piers supporting barrel vaults. Examples include Çiftlik Han on the Sivas–Amasya road (mid-thirteenth century) and the Eğret Han on the Afyon–Kütahya road (first quarter of the thirteenth century). A second, relatively uncommon type, is based on Syrian models, and consists of central courts enclosed by deep arcades. A pair of outstanding examples on the Antalya–Burdur road are the Evdir Han (1219), built by Sultan ʿIzz al-Din Kaykaʾus (1219) and the Kırkgöz Han (*c.* 1240), possibly the work of Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusraw II. The third type of caravanserai joins the covered hall of the first type with the arcaded court of the second. The most notable examples are a pair of buildings, both known as Sultan Han, built by Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kayqubad I, one at Tuzhisar on the Konya–Aksaray road (1229), the other on the Kayseri–Sivas road (1236–1237), and the Karatay Han (*c.* 1231–1240), built by the *atabeg* (a title given to the tutors of Seljuq princes) Jalal al-Din Qaratai on the Kayseri–Malatya road (Figure 13.4). All three have a vaguely military appearance, with high stone walls lacking windows and featuring engaged half-round towers at regular intervals, magnificently carved *pishtaq*s, courtyard surrounded by guest rooms, baths, storerooms and stables, and small mosques.

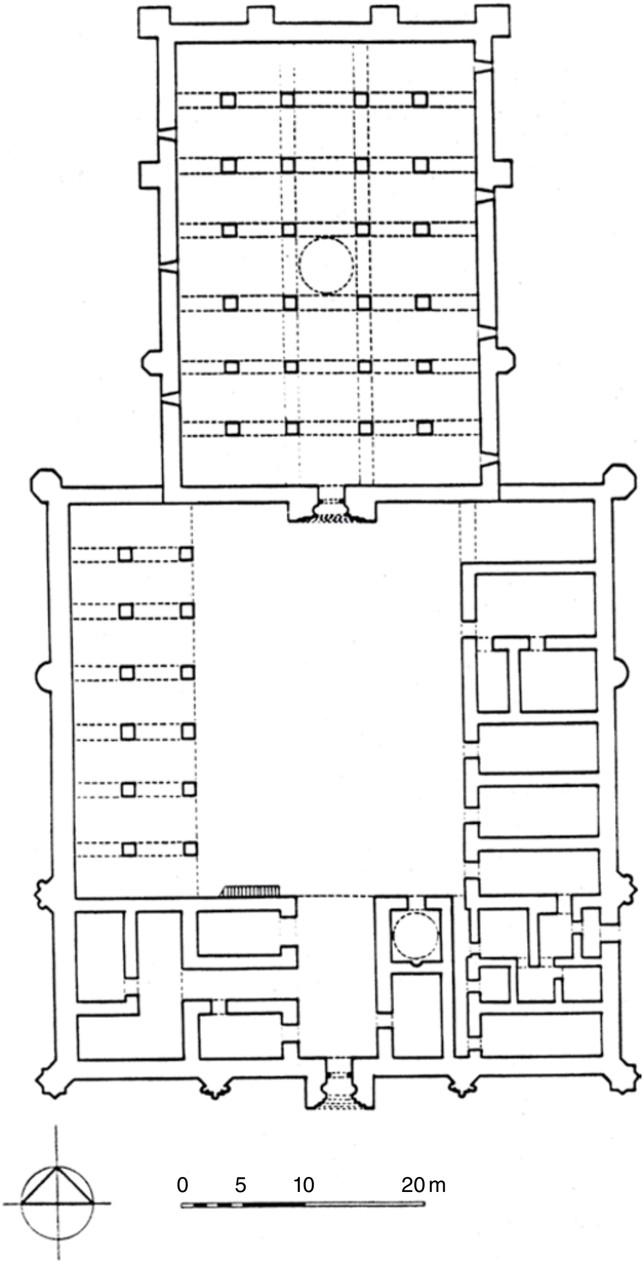

Figure 13.4 Plan, Karatay Han with arcaded open court and covered stable, Kayseri–Malatya road, 1231–1240. Source: Howard Crane. Reproduced with permission.

Other types of secular structures include fortresses, baths, and palaces. The former are attested or survive in more or less fragmentary condition at Alanya, Kayseri, Bayburt, Divriği, Antalya, Ankara, and Konya. As to the latter, only a small portion (dating to the late twelfth century) of the Seljuq palace in Konya survives. However, there remain more extensive portions of a pair of summer palaces built by ʿAlaʾ al-Din Kayqubad I: Kaykubadiye near Kayseri; and Kubadabad, on Lake Beyşehir, incorporating 16 modest structures, including a pair of tiled residential buildings, enclosed within a fortified wall (see Redford 1993a). Heavily decorated with both underglaze and *minaʾi* tiles, the latter was possibly executed by craftsmen brought from Kashan in Iran, then the center of production for such ceramics.

Syria and al-Jazira

Bilad al-Sham (Syria) and al-Jazira (northern Mesopotamia) were both conquered by the Seljuq sultans during the second half of the eleventh century and then divided between members of the Seljuq family and other dynasties who acted as local rulers. In al-Jazira, the Turkish dynasty of the Artuqids soon became an important political power, with Hisn Kaifa (Hasankeyf), Mayyafariqin (Silvan), Kharput (Harput), and Amid (Diyarbakır) as their centers. The Crusader conquest of the Levant and attacks on other parts of Syria and al-Jazira shattered Seljuq control over these areas. After one generation, a Muslim counter-movement began to gain momentum. The *atabeg* Zangi bin Aqsunqur reconquered the city of Edessa (al-Ruha, now Urfa in Turkey) in 1144, and his successor Nur al-Din managed to gather the forces of all Syria for his attacks against the Crusaders. The image of the Zangid ruler as champion of Islam and leader of the *jihad* can be read from building inscriptions in which royal titles abound together with heroic epithets. The building politics of Nur al-Din (r. 1146–1174) and his court included the foundation of madrasas, hadith schools, and hospitals in Aleppo and Damascus. In a similar way, but on a grander scale, this was continued by the rulers of the following dynasty, the Ayyubids. Saladin (r. 1174–1193), founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, succeeded not only in deposing the Fatimid caliphs in Egypt in 1171 but also in taking Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1187. The restitution of the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque as Islamic sanctuaries implied at least partial renovations, the only preserved parts of which are some mosaics, which convey some of the importance attached to these monuments. Little is preserved of Saladin's other foundations, but it seems that for the rebuilding of Jerusalem as an Islamic city, converted Crusader buildings were used to a large extent (Hillenbrand and Auld 2009).

The building of fortifications can be seen as a corollary of *jihad* against the Crusaders; but Ayyubid patrons also built large citadels and castles in places that were not under direct threat from the Latin Christians, and existing fortifications were extended and massively strengthened. The technical development of siege machinery required a change in military architecture that affected the appearance of fortifications, with large bastion-like towers, deep rock-cut ditches, intricately laid out gate complexes and rows of machiculations (Piana 2008). From the eventful political history of the Ayyubid period, in which princes of Syria and al-Jazira not only fought the Crusaders but at times also each other, it can be concluded that defenses were needed to secure control over the surrounding territory. Important cities usually came to feature a citadel in which the ruler garrisoned forces that also controlled the inhabitants and prevented rebellions.

Princely residences of the Ayyubids as well as the Artuqids combined fortification with representation. The palace in the citadel of Aleppo, which preserves parts of the structure built under al-Zahir Ghazi around 1200, has a splendid portal decorated with *muqarnas*, but the dimensions of the central courtyard, measuring 9 × 9 m, are rather small. Nevertheless, it was adorned with a central fountain and a wall fountain (*salsabil*) in one of the four iwans (Tabbaa 1997). Receptions in palaces such as this must have been restricted to small groups. The Artuqid palace in the citadel of Amid (Diyarbakır) had a similar four-iwan unit, decorated with a blue-white inscription of glazed tiles, and a fountain with mosaic decoration. Comparable units dating to the Ayyubid period can be found in other fortresses, like Sahyun, Harim, Qal'at Najm, and Bosra.

An impressive technical standard, with artistic underpinning, was also reached in bridge construction. The Artuqid ruler Husam al-Din Timurtash had a bridge built across a tributary of the Tigris that still stands, spanning the river with a single arch of 38.5 m. Another Artuqid bridge that crossed the Tigris in Hasankeyf with three arches was also adorned with reliefs representing the signs of the zodiac on its pillars.

Mosque buildings in al-Jazira of the eleventh–twelfth centuries offer some fascinating examples of architecture and decoration. The Great Mosque of Diyarbakır, datable to 1091–1092, seems to be a copy of the Great Mosque of Damascus (705–715), with its prayer hall of three aisles crossed by a transept. The lateral courtyard wings, however, which were added in the course of the twelfth century, have been interpreted as an example of "classical revival," not only in the use of classical spolia but also in the re-creation of new pieces very close to classical prototypes. The term has sparked off a debate about the character of architecture and stoneworking in northern Syria and al-Jazira, centered around questions of continuity or survival versus a conscious revival of certain kinds of classicizing stone ornament. Stoneworking in the region can be seen as a longstanding tradition from the pre-Islamic period (witnessed in the rich carved decoration on Christian churches) into early modernity, but in which the period between 1090 and 1170 seems to have been characterized by particularly conscious use of Classical forms (Allen 1986; Raby 2004). The courtyard façade of the Great Mosque of Harran, built under Nur al-Din in 1174, is another example of the use of a rich array of classical forms intermingled with arabesques, *muqarnas* motifs, and other typical Islamic elements, executed in fine stonework. In some other mosque buildings in al-Jazira, a central dome highlights the area in front of the mihrab. In the mosque of Mayyafariqin (Silvan), built in 1165–1166, the dome is supported by eight arches. In the corners, these are filled with stone *muqarnas*. Thus, the building type, as well as elements of architectural decoration, appear to have been heavily influenced by Seljuq Iran, although executed in ashlar rather than brick. Interestingly, a similar translation between brick and stone media can be found in the Islamic architecture of contemporary north India (Flood 2001).

Madrasas were, in a way, the most typical building type of Syria during the Zangid and Ayyubid periods. An early example is the madrasa of the amir Gümüshtegin in Bosra, built in 1136. Despite its small dimensions with a central courtyard of no more than 6 × 6 m, the building has four *iwan*s, a plan generally associated with the Seljuq architecture of Iran. While the execution of the ceilings as flat stone roofs on transversal arches is a clearly local feature, the building type was most certainly inspired by no longer extant examples in Damascus. The madrasa of Gümüshtegin supports the assumption that other early madrasas in Syria were built according to the four-*iwan* plan.

Later madrasas in Damascus and Aleppo show a considerable degree of variation in the arrangement of different architectural units around the courtyard. Cells for students and teachers, one or more *iwan*s used for lecturing, and a prayer hall were common. In Damascus, prayer halls were oblong with transversal vaults or cross vaults. In Aleppo, the usual form was also oblong, but with a central dome flanked by tunnel vaults. Perfectly executed masonry with plain surfaces and a restriction of ornament to the portal are typical of the austere façades. On the portal niches, *muqarnas* appeared first in Damascus, under Nur al-Din, however, in stucco. From the 1190s onwards, *muqarnas* portals were built in stone, first in Aleppo, from where this fashion spread to Damascus and other Syrian cities like Baalbek.

Most Ayyubid rulers founded madrasas in the towns and cities of their principalities, thereby sponsoring educated elites that could serve them loyally. While the principal features of these schools had been established earlier, the style of individual elements changed, and the dimensions of buildings grew larger; the creation of new variants did not cease until the end of the Ayyubid period. The Madrasa al-Firdaws, founded by Dayfa Khatun, *grande dame* of Ayyubid Aleppo, is considered the most developed of all Ayyubid madrasas. Built in 1235–1241, it was apparently influenced by the madrasa of the caliph al-Mustansir in Baghdad (see Tabaa, CHAPTER 12): here, for example, the large inscription band running across the façade appears for the first time in Syria. With relatively large dimensions of 55 × 45 m, the complex comprised the functions of madrasa, mausoleum, and *ribat* (here: convent for Sufis). The courtyard façades are lined with arcades on three sides, while an *iwan* occupies the north side. The central bay of the prayer hall in the south is accentuated with a slightly elevated dome, supported by a drum on *muqarnas* pendentives. Colored marble inlay in the shape of interwoven bands decorates the qibla wall. An epigraphic frieze running around the

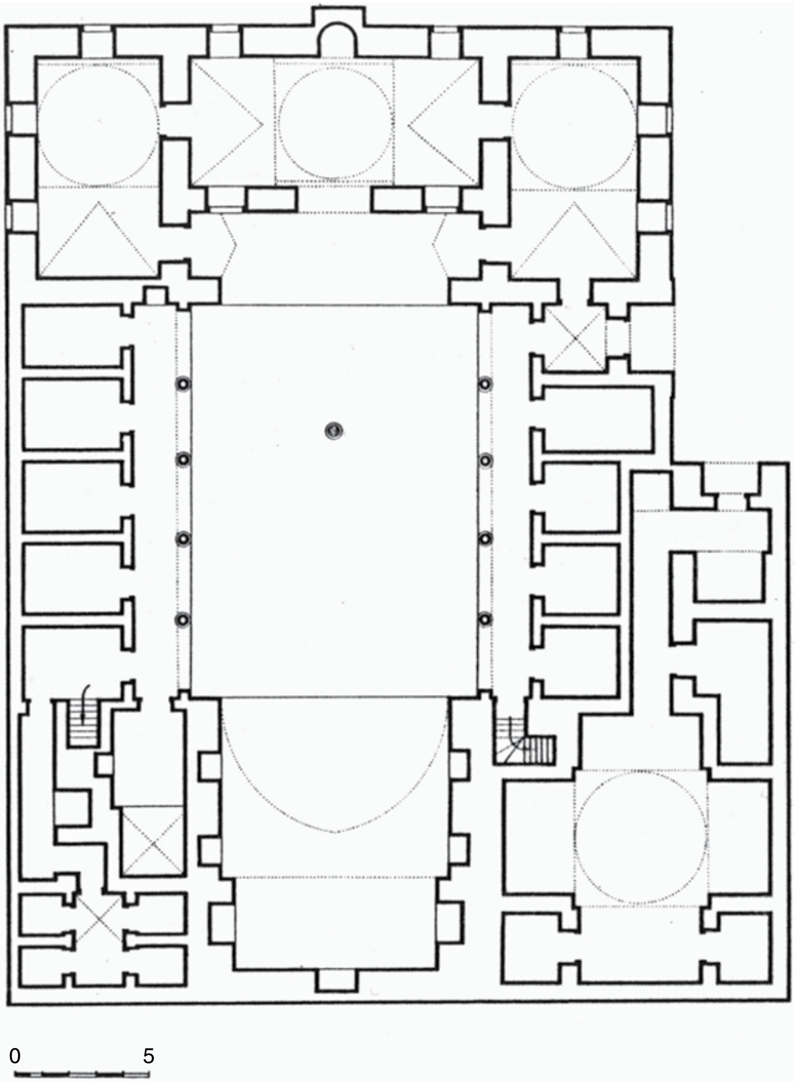

Figure 13.5 Aleppo, Madrasa Kamaliyya ʿAdimiyya, 1241–1252, ground plan. Source: After J. Sauvaget: *Alep. Essai sur le développement d'une grande ville syrienne, des origines au milieu du XIXe siècle,* Paris 1941. Reproduced with permission by Universität Tübingen, Asien-Orient-Institut, Abteilung für Orient- und Islamwissenschaft.

courtyard walls describes the nocturnal sessions of the Sufis in poetic language (Tabbaa 1997). The Madrasa Kamaliyya ʿAdimiyya, built in 1241–1251 by the Ayyubid vizier of Aleppo (Figure 13.5), comprises similar architectural elements in a different arrangement but with the same austere aesthetics.

Another building type characteristic of Zangid and Ayyubid Aleppo, and showing some formal similarities to the madrasa, was the *mashhad*. Built for the

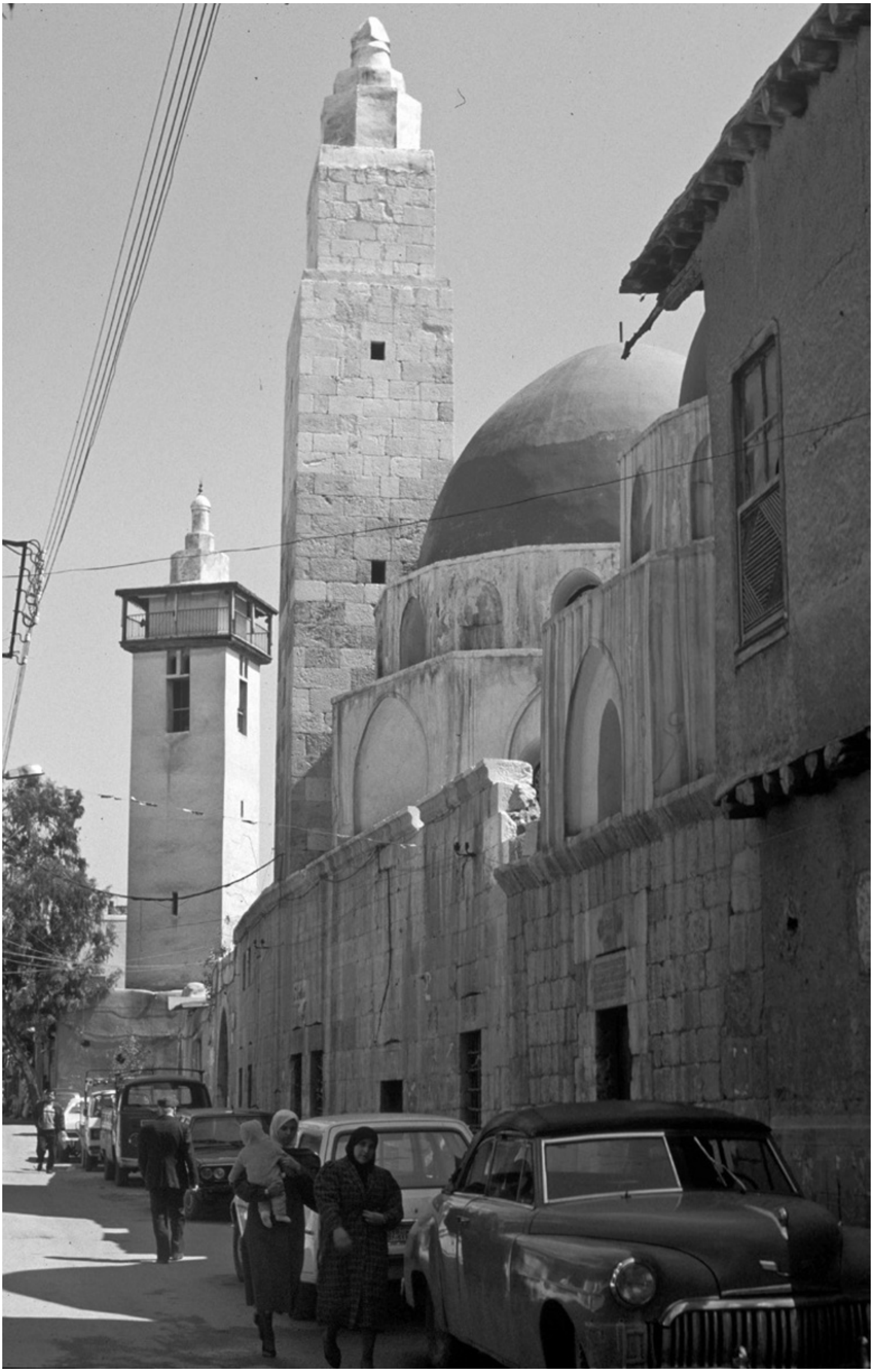

FIGURE 13.6 Damascus, al-Salihiyya, street view with façades, domes, and minarets of the Madrasas al-Farnathiyya, al-Murshidiyya, al-Ashrafiyya, and al-Atabakiyya, first half of thirteenth century. Source: Lorenz Korn. Reproduced with permission.

purpose of commemoration for the Shiʿite community of the city, on the spot of a burial or deposit of holy relics, the *mashhad*s consist of various architectural units arranged around a courtyard in apparent asymmetry. The complexes of the Mashhad al-Husayn and Mashhad al-Muhassin in Aleppo (with principal phases of construction in 1195–1198) seem to have developed in an additive manner over a period, and could serve pilgrims as well as the local community (Mulder 2014).

For the cityscape of Damascus, the construction of mausolea (*turba*, pl. *turab*) was a decisive factor. Their great number and details of their patronage suggest that elites across the whole Ayyubid territory represented themselves in the mausolea of Damascus. While madrasas usually included a mausoleum at one corner of the façade, freestanding mausolea were also a common building type. On a cubic base, usually built of ashlar with massive lintels and flat relieving arches above the rectangular windows, the transitional zone and the dome were normally built of brick with a smoothly plastered surface. The interior decoration was frequently executed in stucco, with ledges and simple profiles framing large fields. Mausolea of this type were built in the suburbs of Damascus, particularly in al-Salihiyya, which grew rapidly during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Figure 13.6). Variants can be seen in mausolea that were cross-vaulted instead of domed, and mausolea with arcades open on three or four sides. In a few cases, the interior stucco decoration has been preserved, ranging from simple frames to splendid *muqarnas*.

The Punjab and Northern India

Although Sind and the southern Punjab had been conquered by the Arabs in the seventh and eighth centuries, and communities of Arab and Persian merchants had long been established in various west Indian ports, it was in this period that both the Indus Valley and northern India were incorporated into the eastern Islamic domains. Beginning in the early eleventh century, Mahmud of Ghazni (r. 1002–1030) extended Muslim political control into the western Punjab. This was followed in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries by the north Indian lands east of the Indus, conquered by the Ghurids and their mamluks or military slaves, who ruled north India in their own right when the Ghurid sultanate collapsed around 1210.

Throughout the period, religious and intellectual links with the Islamic and Persianate worlds were strengthened, in part by an influx of refugees fleeing the Mongols from Iran and central Asia. At the same time, the Delhi sultanate was fertilized and enriched by inputs from the Indic culture of the subcontinent. As a result, the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Islamic architecture of the region is characterized by a synthesis of local northwest Indian building traditions with forms and functions imported from Iran and central Asia.

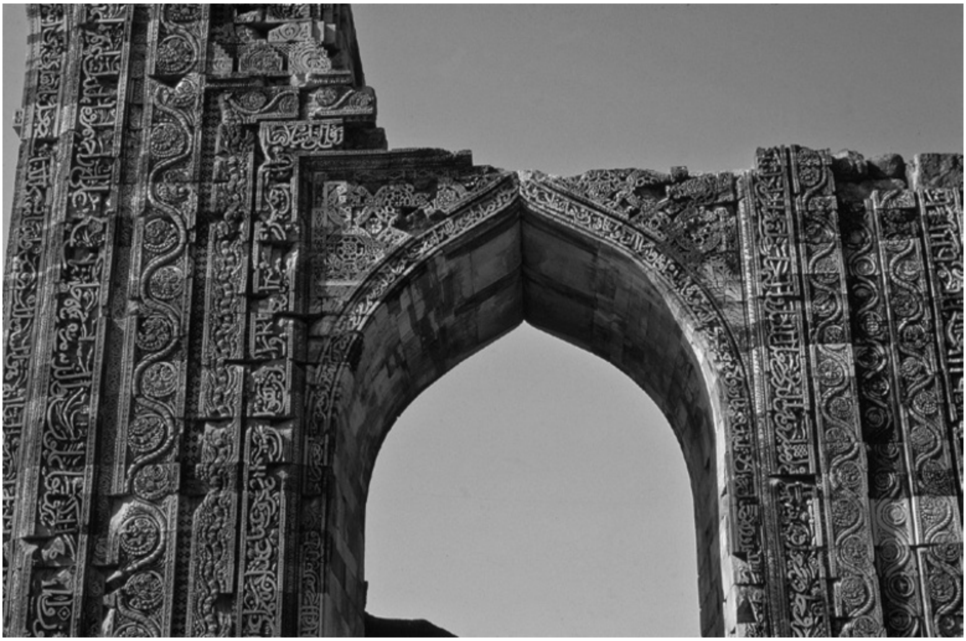

FIGURE 13.7 Detail of corbelled ogee arch of Qutb al-Din Aybak's screen showing vegetal and epigraphic borders, Qutb mosque, Delhi, *c.* 1200, showing Indic-style corbelled ogee arches and carved decoration of meandering vines, buds, and floral medallions. Source: Howard Crane. Reproduced with permission.

Relatively few Islamic monuments in the Indus Valley and north Indian plain can be securely dated to this period. Surviving architecture consists almost exclusively of mosques and tombs of powerful members of the ruling elite and Sufi saints. In the Indus Valley, monuments were constructed of brick, the traditional building material of the region, and are closely linked in morphology and structure to the architecture of eastern Iran (Khurasan). East of the Indus, the normative building material is stone, often spolia from Hindu and Jain temples, and structural forms are derived from indigenous architectural practice. Thus, while in the Indus Valley both trabeated and arcuated solutions are employed, there is a clear preference for the latter. East of the Indus, however, trabeated structures are ubiquitous, and arches (ogee, pointed and lobed) and vaults (both domical and lantern), where present, are, at least until the middle of the thirteenth century, corbelled in the Indian manner (Figure 13.7). Façade decoration in the Indus area is executed in decorative brickwork in a manner distinct from Khurasani *hazar-baf*. In the region of Delhi, on the other hand, relief carved stone is the norm. Indus Valley façades are often broken up by strongly articulated pilaster strips, cornices, and entablatures in the Indic manner, and by pearl chain and textile patterns of carved and molded brick. In the region of Delhi, elaborate Ghaznavid- or Ghurid-style epigraphic borders of knotted and foliated Arabic

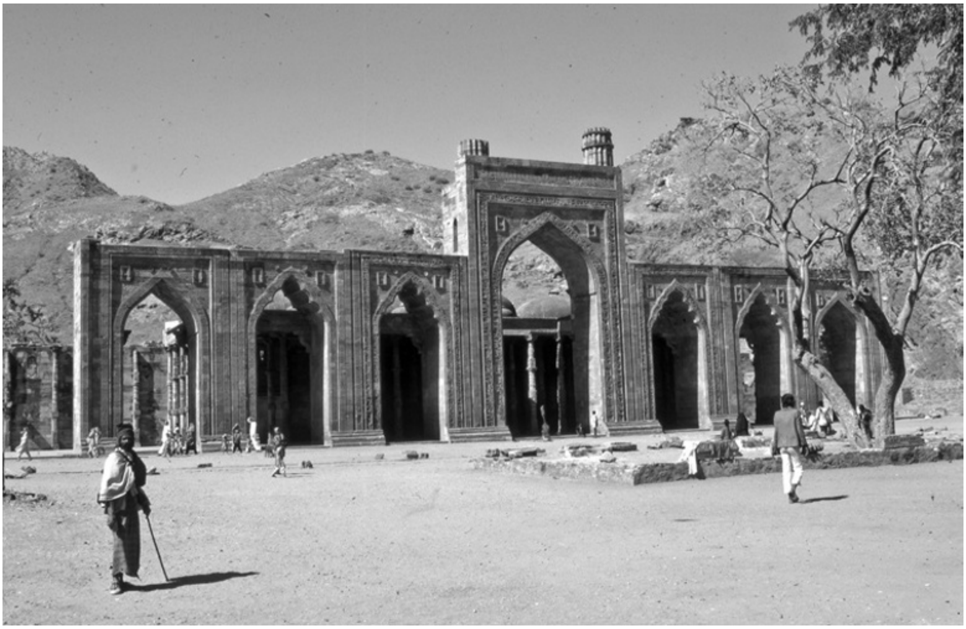

FIGURE 13.8 Prayer hall screen, Adhai-din-ka-Jhompra Mosque, Ajmer, 1206. Source: Howard Crane. Reproduced with permission.

script are juxtaposed with relief carved friezes of meandering vines, flowers, closed buds, and floral medallions associated iconographically and compositionally with the repertoire of the Hindu water cosmology.

A number of mosques, for the most part dating to the end of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries survive east of the Indus. Generally, they are characterized by monumental gateways leading to courtyards enclosed by porticos with hypostyle prayer halls. Although superficially relatable to the hypostyle Arab mosque, it seems more likely that they derived from the *mandapa* halls of Hindu temples. Significantly, the Iranian four-*iwan* plan is nowhere to be found.

Virtually nothing remains from this period in the way of mosque architecture west of the Indus. However, the presence of Muslim Arab and Persian merchant communities, engaged in the Indian Ocean trade in ports of western India, is attested by a pair of mid-twelfth-century hypostyle mosques, the Chhoti Mosque (*c.* 1160) and Solahkhambhi Mosque (*c.* 1177–1178) in Bhadreshvar in western Gujarat (Shokoohy and Shokoohy 1988).

The character of Ghurid and early Delhi sultanate mosque architecture in the trans-Indus area is exemplified by five buildings located in Delhi and Rajasthan: the Qutb (Quwwat al-Islam) Mosque (begun 1193) in Delhi; the Adhai-din-ka-Jhompra (Two and a Half Day) Mosque (1206) in Ajmer (Figure 13.8); the Shahi Mosque in Khutu; the Chaurasi Khambha (84 Pillared) Mosque in Kaman; and the Ukha Mandir Mosque in Bayana (Flood 2009: 137–226; Patel 2004). All date to the last decade of the twelfth or first decade of the thirteenth century and are characterized by portico-enclosed courtyards, hypostyle prayer halls, and the extensive use of spolia from Hindu and Jain temples, from which exuberant theriomorphic (i.e., having an animal form) iconography has been selectively effaced. The archetypical example is the Qutb Mosque (Welch, Keshani, and Bain 2002), which was begun by Qutb al-Din Aybak as the congregational mosque of the newly conquered Qilʿa Rai Pithora, the fortress city of the Rajput kings of Delhi. The mosque complex has a long and complicated architectural history, additions and enlargements having been carried out by Iltutmish (r. 1211–1236), Qutb al-Din's successor, and later by the Khalji and the Tughluq sultans of Delhi in the fourteenth century. The twelfth-century core stands atop a raised plinth and consists of a rectangular courtyard with trabeate porticos on three sides and the prayer hall on the west. Access to the courtyard on the east is through a monumental gate on the axis of the mihrab, with cross axial gates on the north and south sides of the courtyard. The hypostyle prayer hall is four bays deep and consists of aisles running parallel to the qibla wall. It was originally covered by five large corbelled domes, each spanning nine bays, and by flat stone slabs supported on lintels in the Indic manner. A stone screen wall of five corbelled, ogee arches stands before the eastern façade of the prayer hall, the central arch of which is both higher and wider than the pairs flanking it on either side, thereby mimicking the visual effect of a central iwan (Figure 13.7). The screen is elaborately decorated in carved relief consisting of vegetal and floral motifs of Indic origin (meandering vines, buds, and floral medallions) and Qurʾanic inscriptions in somewhat awkward *tughra* and *naskh* script. In terms of both structure and decoration, it is thus clear that the Qutb Mosque was the work of local artisans, although its overall morphology and function were, of course, dictated by the patron. Recent research suggests a complex chain of command from Muslim patrons to the Hindu masons responsible for constructing the building and (re)carving its spoliated stones (Flood 2009: 184–189).

Immediately to the south of the Qutb mosque stands a massive, five-story minaret of red sandstone and white marble, the Qutb Minar (Welch, Keshani, and Bain 2002), some 76 m in height, again begun by Aybak in 1199 but only completed by Firuz Shah Tughluq in 1368. Although its symbolic associations remain a matter of controversy, there can be no question but that it was inspired by monuments such as the Ghaznavid minarets of Ghazni and the Ghurid Minaret of Jam at Firuzkuh.

A second type of structure, the *ʿidgah* (literally a place for festivals or festival grounds) used for congregational prayer on festive days, is functionally related to the mosque. Typically, it consists of a large open space with a wall on the qibla side containing one or more mihrabs, and terminating on north and south with truncated towers. Iranian prototypes are attested as early as the eighth century in Bukhara, Isfahan, and Bust. Early examples have survived at Bayana, attributable to the town's first Muslim governor, Bahaʾ al-Din Tughril (r. 1195–1209), and at Badaʾun, built perhaps by Iltutmish (Flood 2005; Shokoohy and Shokoohy 1987: 129–132).

Although lacking epigraphic evidence, the earliest surviving examples of Islamic tomb architecture in the Indic region appear to date to the second half of the twelfth century and are found in Multan in southwest Punjab and at Bhadreshvar on the western coast of Gujarat. Morphologically, they can be arranged into two groups, canopy tombs consisting of a single square bay, often a *chahar taq*, covered by a dome on squinches, a type common in Iran; and *chhatri* or baldachin tombs consisting of a shallow corbelled dome supported on piers or columns, possibly derived from the *mandapa* halls or dancing pavilions of Hindu temples.

Within the Indus Valley, the surviving Ghaznavid and Ghurid period tombs are all of the canopy type. A striking example is located near the village of Sadan, north of Muzaffargarh, and is associated with a certain Shaykh Sadan Shahid (Flood 2001). Probably dating to the last quarter of the twelfth century, it is constructed of plain buff fired brick and is set atop a high plinth originally decorated with pedimented niches separated by narrow engaged colonettes. Atop the plinth, the tomb chamber was originally covered by a domical vault on dentil-filled squinches. Axial openings on all four sides of the tomb are spanned by trilobed arches and the façades are subdivided by pilaster strips enriched with inscriptions in Arabic, which frame ogival *gavaksa* niches. The plinth, subdivisions of the façades with pilaster strips, *gavaksa* niches, and other details find obvious parallels in the Buddhist and Hindu architectural tradition of northwest India, while the form of the building and extensive epigraphic ornament indicate close links with the Ghaznavid and Ghurid architecture of eastern Iran and Afghanistan.

Canopy tombs in the region of Delhi include that of Iltutmish (*c.* 1236; Welch, Keshani, and Bain 2002), located in the Qutb complex, and the now much dilapidated tomb of Balban (*c.* 1287) at Mehrauli. Like trans-Indus mosque architecture, the medium of construction is stone. The tomb of Iltutmish, built of drafted ashlars, is a two-story structure consisting of a square upper chamber, the oratory, with axial entrances on the north, south and east spanned by corbelled ogee arches, and three multifoil mihrabs on the west, and a subterranean crypt reached by a flight of steps on the north side. Significantly, its fabric consists entirely of new material and does not incorporate any spolia. It differs markedly from the Indus Valley tombs, in that while exterior decoration is restricted to the portals, the entirety of the interior is covered with a lavish, relief-carved program of monumental epigraphy and Indic vegetal motifs. The no longer extant dome was apparently constructed of corbelling on corbelled squinches, the earliest instance of the latter's use in the trans-Indus region.

Finally, there are a number of what appear to be multifunctional Ghurid–Muʿizzi buildings, that is, buildings erected by the Ghurids or their mamluk agents in north India, that served, at least in part, a commemorative purpose. Among them are the commemorative shrines (*dargah*s and *khanqah*s) built around the tombs of famous Sufi saints (Data Ganj Bakhsh in Lahore, Shaykh Bahaʾ al-Din Zakariyya in Multan, Muʿin al-Din Chishti in Ajmer), none of which retain their original architectural character. One that does, however, is the tomb *ribat* at Kabirwala near Multan, built according to its foundation inscription, by a certain ʿAli b. Karmakh, the Ghurid governor of Multan in the decade after 1176 (Edwards 1991). Its multifunctional purpose is expressed by its fortified exterior wall enclosing a tomb and small prayer hall and other indeterminate subsidiary spaces.

Conclusion

As noted earlier, the period between the tenth and thirteenth centuries was one of fundamental change in the architectural infrastructure of the eastern Islamic world. Just where the changes associated with this transformation first developed is a matter of controversy, though it is clear that it was closely bound to the Turko-Persian states that flourished between Anatolia and north India. Moreover, given that many of the forms, planning solutions, techniques, and iconographies that came to define this transformation became ubiquitous throughout the region, it seems legitimate to consider this architecture not as a series of discrete regional phenomena but as an international period style. Since many of the forms and modes came to be defining elements of Islamic visual culture in the following centuries, there is every reason to designate the time between 1050 and 1250 as a "classical" period.

Such a designation represents a marked departure from the way in which the period was represented in earlier art-historical scholarship, in which, following in the footsteps of cultural and intellectual historians, who treated the so-called Abbasid golden age of the ninth century as the "classical" moment of Islamic art, saw the subsequent period as one of decline. It is now clear, however, that the eleventh to thirteenth centuries saw the emergence in the eastern Islamic world of a vibrant visual culture that vitally shaped later developments in the region and beyond. In that process, which is associated with the transition from the rule of Arab to Persianate and Turkic (and later Turko-Mongol) dynasties, many of the characteristics of the formative period of Islamic art were relegated to oblivion, while new artistic forms from China and elsewhere were eagerly adopted and adapted (see Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu 2007).

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14

Bridging Seas of Sand and Water: The Berber Dynasties of the Islamic Far West

Abigail Balbale

The Islamic Middle Period witnessed enormous demographic shifts, as the population under Muslim rule became majority Muslim and non-Arab groups sought to assert their power within the Islamic system. The Berber dynasties of the Islamic far west (Maghrib), like the Turkic Seljuqs and Ghaznavids in the east (Mashriq), aimed to integrate themselves into an Islamic political system centered around the Sunni Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad while also maintaining their own cultural identity. Their power base in North Africa (Ifriqiyya) had been incorporated into the Abbasid Empire by the Aghlabids (800–909), a dynasty of amirs who ruled on behalf of the caliphs in Baghdad for about a century until they were overthrown by the Fatimids. The Almoravids (*c.* 1062–1150), who once again recognized Abbasid overlordship, and subsequently the autonomous Almohads (1150–1269) ruled much the same territory, stretching from the Sahara across the Strait of Gibraltar, creating a unified political zone that facilitated the movement of goods, people, and ideas. With a shared set of materials and cultural referents, both dynasties adapted elements of Abbasid and Andalusian visual culture and combined them with inherited regional and new forms of their own, which reflected their substantially different understandings of religious and political authority.

Often cast in scholarship as uncouth desert dwellers whose understanding of Islam was as rigid as their art was derivative, the Berber dynasties' cultural legacies are far richer and more complex than such a caricature would suggest

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(Rosser-Owen 2014: 153–154). They unified a vast geographic expanse under their authority and, empowered by the wealth generated through trade between West Africa and the Mediterranean, constructed novel political systems and artistic and cultural forms that would echo for centuries in the western Mediterranean.

The Berbers in History and Scholarship

Assessing the construction of Berber identity challenges the modern scholar. As early as the Roman period, the peoples of North Africa were known as "Mazices," a tribal name likely derived from the term for speakers of the language Tamazight. The linguistic approach, defining Berbers as those who speak one of the Berber languages, is perhaps the most common, since genetic studies show no substantial difference between self-identified Berbers and those who live alongside them (Brett and Fentress 1996). But the speakers of Berber languages are not necessarily a distinct group, since the peoples of North Africa underwent processes of both Arabization and Berberization – meaning that some native Arabic speakers learned Berber languages and Berber speakers learned Arabic. From the Islamic conquests of the eighth century until the present day, these two language groups coexisted and competed with each other. The dynasties addressed here are called "Berber" because they explicitly presented themselves as such, rooting their power in Berber tribal confederations, and in the case of the Almohads, granting a Berber language an unprecedentedly central role in Islamic political and religious ritual.

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship on the western Islamic world often created hierarchies that reflected the values of European colonialism and nationalism. Thus, Reinhart Dozy, the great nineteenth-century Dutch Orientalist, wrote about the emergence of the Almoravids in Iberia as the destruction of a tolerant and secular Euro-Islamic society and its replacement with a backward, barbarous African one: "Civilization was replaced with barbarism, intelligence with superstition, tolerance with fanaticism" (Dozy 1881: I, 348). This vision of the Almoravids and of later Berber dynasties as "barbaric" gained popularity as European powers, particularly the French, sought to justify their expansion into Ottoman-ruled North Africa by presenting the continent as backward. This colonialist agenda colored the depiction of all aspects of North African history in European sources, including the narrative of the Almoravid "conquest" of Ghana in the eleventh century that was transformed to reflect a racial hierarchy, in which lighter skinned people naturally rule over darker skinned ones (Masonen and Fisher 1996: 213–214). The colonialist and nationalist bent in European scholarship on Iberia and Africa has proven remarkably long-lasting, leading to consistent depictions of intermixed Andalusians as proto-Spaniards, European and secular, and of Berbers as fanatical interlopers who are distinct ethnically, linguistically, and culturally.

This has led to a systematic undervaluing of North African contributions to the culture of the Islamic West, including the long history of Berber Muslims in this region before the rise of the Almoravids – starting with the heavily Berber armies that conquered al-Andalus in the eighth century. In art history, the objects and architecture produced by the Berber dynasties of the Islamic West have often been dismissed as derivative of a more developed Andalusian tradition (Rosser-Owen 2014: 154).

Trade across the Sahara

The desert that lies between the Mediterranean shore of Africa and the rest of the continent is popularly imagined as impenetrable. Its name, Sahara, from the Arabic *sahra'* for desert, reinforces the idea of a super desert, and in both medieval and modern writing it is often portrayed as a physical barrier that separates two distinct geographic and cultural spheres. But medieval Arabic chroniclers describe it as a sea of sand. The Sahara's edges are described as shores (from which the geographic term "Sahel" derives), its oases as islands, and caravans that are lost are described as wrecked. As with its maritime counterpart, traversing the Sahara required skilled knowledge and could yield great riches. Literary and material evidence suggest that the communities that lived within the Sahara and to its south were in frequent contact with those to the north, and that trade routes across the desert existed from at least as early as the Roman period. Beginning with the introduction of the camel in the third century CE, and accelerating in subsequent years, caravans crossed the Sahara regularly along several routes. The eighth to the sixteenth century constituted the peak of trans-Saharan trade, much of it overseen by Berber tribesmen. The caravan routes served as cultural conduits, bringing religious teachings, language, and iconography in both directions, along with traded goods.

Islamic conquests and the rise of new dynasties transformed older Saharan trade. The far western route, between Sijilmasa and Awdaghust, via present-day Mauritania, traversed territory controlled by the Berber Sanhaja tribal confederation, and was known as the Lamtuni route for one of its tribes. These routes became channels for the transmission of Islam and the Arabic language, and the wealth provided by trade augmented the power of the tribes that controlled it.

In the eighth and ninth centuries, trans-Saharan trade supported several Kharijite dynasties, which rejected caliphal authority and argued that any righteous man could be a ruler. The Ibadi Rustumids in modern-day Tunisia and Algeria and the Sufri Midrarids in southern Morocco pioneered large-scale trans-Saharan trade, bringing materials like ivory and gold north and returning south with food stuffs and finished goods (Gaiser 2013: 44). Much of the coinage minted in the western Islamic world was made of gold carried across the Sahara. Arabic chroniclers described the mythical quantities of gold available beyond the

Sahara. Al-Yaʿqubi (d. 897/898) described one of the towns under the authority of the Midrarids as being so full of gold that: "it is found like plants and it is said that the wind blows it away" (Levtzion and Hopkins 2000: 22). Slaves were also traded along these routes; brought from the regions generically referred to in Arabic as the lands of the "blacks" (*sudan*) to the shores of the Mediterranean, where they were transported throughout the Islamic world. Under the Kharijite dynasties and their successors, the Almoravids, the hunger for African slaves in the Islamic East led to an economic boom, and North African mints flourished because of the demand for currency to pay for slaves (Gaiser 2013: 62–63).

In the beginning of the tenth century, a new dynasty emerged in Ifriqiyya, claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, and powered by support from the Kutama tribe. The Fatimids (r. 909–1171) were the first of three important Berber dynasties that would unify North Africa politically and oversee the conversion of most of its people to Islam. Fatimid control over trans-Saharan trade financed their military campaigns and supported their eventual move to the new city of Cairo, after 969.

The rise of the Almoravids (from the Arabic *al-murabitun*, lit. dwellers of a frontier monastery or *ribat*) led to the expansion of this trade. The Almoravids were Lamtuna Berbers from the western Sahara who were eager to rebuild the weakened Sanhaja tribal confederation. Their movement was inspired by the teachings of ʿAbdallah ibn Yasin, a member of the Jazula tribe (also part of the Sanhaja confederation) and a theologian. Ibn Yasin called for a society based on a strict reading of Maliki law, which prioritized the Qurʾan as a source of Islamic law. The Maliki school, emphasizing the traditions of the Prophet's companions in Medina, had been dominant in the Islamic West since the time of the Umayyads (and remains so today), yet the Almoravids called for a renewed focus on Islamic legal sources and on *jihad* against non-Muslims. Under Ibn Yasin's leadership, the Almoravids attacked the Berber tribes of the Sanhaja confederation and brought them under their authority. Beginning in 1053, they campaigned along the trans-Saharan routes and rapidly reclaimed control of the salt, gold, and slave trades.

In 1054 and 1055, the Almoravids took control of Sijilmasa and Awdaghust, the major terminus points of the trans-Saharan trade. Although narratives that describe the Almoravids conquering and forcibly converting the kingdom of Ghana have come under recent reconsideration (Masonen and Fisher 1996), it is clear that the Almoravid period saw a growing Muslim presence in the Wagadu Empire of Ghana (*c.* 830–*c.* 1235). The trade routes through the Sahara and into the kingdom of Ghana became conduits for the dissemination of Sunni Maliki thought. Excavations at Sijilmasa show that the city was greatly expanded during the Almoravid period, reflecting the growth and importance of trade with the Sudan.

Further to the south, excavations have shown a growing Muslim population over the same period. The Andalusian scholar al-Bakri (d. 1094) described the capital of Ghana as having 12 mosques (Levtzion and Hopkins 2000: 79–80). Archaeologists at Koumbi Saleh, purportedly the capital of medieval Ghana in modern Mauritania, uncovered the stone foundations of a mosque thought to be from the tenth century, expanded in the eleventh century and decorated with locally made tiles that incorporated geometric motifs and Arabic inscriptions (Bravmann 2000: 512; Devisse and Diallo 1993: 108). The construction of mosques indicates the increased presence of both Muslim traders and local converts. In Gao, an important trade center of Mali, excavations uncovered funerary stelae made of marble from the region of Almería in al-Andalus, some imported already carved. These stelae, inscribed in Arabic with Qurʾanic passages, also include the names of the deceased, which reflects their recent conversion to Islam (Insoll 2003: 235).

The Almoravid control of trans-Saharan trade routes, and particularly the access to gold it afforded them, considerably enriched their empire. The dinars they minted out of gold from Ghana became one of the most important currencies of the medieval Mediterranean, used in treaties between Christian kings and mentioned in poetry. Genoese merchants profited by exporting the comparatively pure "morabetins," as these coins were called, from the western Mediterranean to the Islamic East. There is even mention of the Almoravid Empire as the economic center of the far west in a twelfth-century Chinese document (Messier 1974). Later, the Almohads' "square in circle" gold coinage would have comparable circulation, as its form was copied by the Ayyubids in the Levant and the Ghurids in what is today Afghanistan (Flood 2009: 103–104).

The Development of a Common Material and Visual Culture

The trade routes sketched above connected distinct geographic zones that produced diverse raw materials and foodstuffs, and allowed for the exchange of complementary goods. The rich array led, in turn, to new forms of cultural production, from African ivory crafted into caskets in the Fatimid style in Norman Palermo to the dinar minted of African gold in the Almoravid style by the Castilian king Alfonso VIII (r. 1158–1214). As these examples suggest, the multidirectional connections among the peoples of North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Mediterranean Europe frequently produced objects that challenge classification. At the same time, the particular forms adopted by new dynasties could carry ideological meaning. For the Berber dynasties of the Islamic far west, cultural production constituted an important means of articulating their understanding of righteous spiritual and temporal power.

The Almoravids

In the vacuum left by the Fatimid caliphate's move to Cairo in 969, the Almoravids united North Africa politically and culturally once more. The Almoravids were the first dynasty in the far west to support the Abbasid caliphate since the

Aghlabids, and their loyalty to the caliphate in Baghdad was all the more striking after the Fatimids and Iberian Umayyads had claimed the caliphate for themselves. Almoravid authority was built on the basis of a strident Sunni traditionalism, explicitly pledging allegiance to the Abbasids and urging *jihad* against the infidels engaged in "Reconquista." In 1086, following the Castilian conquest of Toledo, the Taifa kings (Muslim-ruled principalities) of al-Andalus asked the Almoravids for help against encroaching Christian armies. The Almoravids fought the Christians and then stayed in al-Andalus, uniting it with most of northwestern Africa. Almoravid cultural production, like that of other semi-independent Sunni dynasties in the east, reflected their rejection of Shiʿi power and allegiance to the Abbasids. The art and architecture produced during the Sunni Revival of the eleventh and twelfth centuries presented remarkably similar forms across the expanse of the Islamic world, and Almoravid art shares important commonalities with the art of the late Abbasids, Ghaznavids, and Seljuqs and their successors in the east, including the use of complex geometric patterns, cursive inscriptions, and the *muqarnas* (Necipoğlu 1995: 101). At the same time that the Almoravids introduced forms associated with the Abbasids, they also laid claim to the heritage of the Umayyads of Cordoba through their use of spolia taken from the Umayyad monuments of al-Andalus (Rosser-Owen 2014).

Almoravid art presents an emphasis on geometric forms, particularly patterns framed by strapwork and made up of interlocking angular forms often combining stars and polygons. The *minbar* begun in Cordoba in 1137 for the Almoravid amir ʿAli ibn Yusuf (r. 1106–1143), long held in the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakesh, is one of the finest examples of such patterning (Figure 14.1). Over 12.5 feet tall, the *minbar* is made of wooden panels carved with intricate vegetal motifs, separated by strapwork bands of wood and bone marquetry that form eight-pointed stars and irregular polygons. This constitutes the earliest marquetry that survives from al-Andalus. Every stair riser is adorned with a set of five inlaid horseshoe arches on columns, as if to support the weight of the step. Above the first and the last step are pairs of arcatures in horseshoe form, mirroring the two-dimensional arches on the risers, and on the back of the chair is a web of multi-lobed arches.

The form and materials of the *minbar* from the Kutubiyya Mosque illuminate the connections across the Sahara and the Strait of Gibraltar in the Almoravid period. The wood panels carved with vegetal arabesques that lay inside the stars and other geometric forms framed by strapwork were likely crafted in Cordoba, and the inscription indicates that the object itself was "fashioned" (*suniʿa*) there as well. But Jonathan Bloom suggests that the *minbar* was shipped in pieces via the Guadalquivir River, then across the Mediterranean, and overland to Marrakesh. The marquetry that fills the strapwork was assembled directly onto the *minbar*. The materials used include bone and three types of wood – one of which, African blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) (Bloom 1998: 9), only grew in Africa south of the Sahara. The production of this object therefore required the movement of

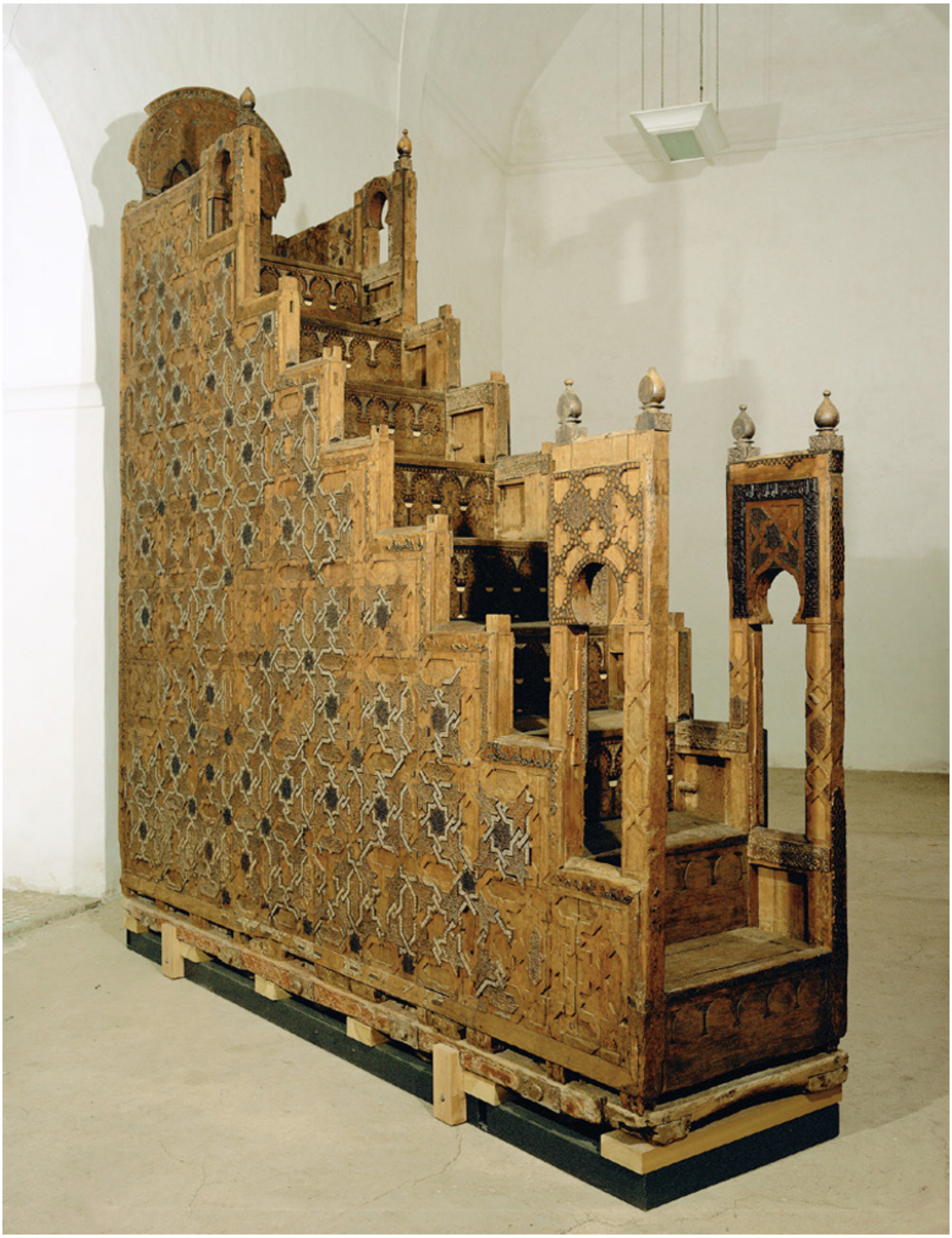

Figure 14.1 *Minbar* of the Kutubiyya Mosque, al-Badiʿ Palace, Marrakesh. Source: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY. Reproduced with permission.

materials, craftsmen, and traders across hundreds if not thousands of miles, and in some cases likely involved crossing the Strait of Gibraltar twice.

Many elements of the *minbar* are closely related to the architecture and luxury arts of the Umayyads of Cordoba, from the vegetal carvings that recall Cordoban ivories to the architectural forms familiar from the Great Mosque of Cordoba. Yet the emphasis on strapwork and geometry also reflects the development of a Sunni aesthetic, which, as Gülru Necipoğlu and Yasser Tabbaa have noted, spread rapidly to the peripheries of the Islamic world after its birth in Baghdad. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the dynasties along the eastern and western frontiers of the Islamic world, like the Ghaznavids, Seljuqs, and Almoravids, had power but little legitimacy according to Sunni traditions of authority, and adapting the forms of Abbasid Baghdad helped them associate themselves with the legitimizing power of the caliphate (Necipoğlu 1995: 101, 108; Tabbaa 2001: 164; see also Tabba, CHAPTER 12). Along with abstract vegetal arabesques and geometric patterns, these dynasties embraced an architectural system of honeycomb or stalactite squinches known as *muqarnas*, as well as cursive epigraphy. As Necipoğlu argues,

> It was as if the ideological alliance between the Abbasids and the semi-independent Sunni rulers of the decentralized medieval Islamic world was expressed through the rapid dissemination from Baghdad of emblematic signs that acted as a semiotic bond visually uniting distinct regions. (Necipoğlu 1995: 108)

The domed kiosk known as the Qubbat al-Barudiyyin (or Baʿadiyin), constructed in Marrakesh by the Almoravids under ʿAli ibn Yusuf in 1117, presents some of the earliest monumental cursive epigraphy and *muqarnas*-like forms in the Islamic West (Figure 14.2). Three distinct levels are visible from the outside, with open arched doors on each side surmounted by keyhole, pointed horseshoe and multi-lobed windows on the second level, and topped with crenellations similar to those used in Fatimid structures and some parts of the Great Mosque in Cordoba, framing a dome adorned with interlocking arches across its surface. This unusual domed structure is even more striking from the inside, where two rotated squares form an octagon at the base of the dome. Each side of the octagon is adorned with a scallop shell carved in high relief, resting on a bed of vegetal arabesque made up of palms, acanthus leaves and pinecones, and is surmounted by a trilobed *muqarnas* squinch. Above these eight squinches, eight ribs come together to create a flower-shaped dome. In the corners of the rectangular structure, which are not connected to the central dome, lie four smaller domes made up of two layers of *muqarnas*. An inscription in cursive or *naskh* script once ran around all four interior walls naming the patron ʿAli ibn Yusuf and pledging obedience to the Abbasids, but it was destroyed by the Almohads and survives only in fragmentary form (Tabbaa 2008: 140).

This structure combines elements that are closely related both to earlier Andalusian and North African examples – such as the ribbed domes of the great

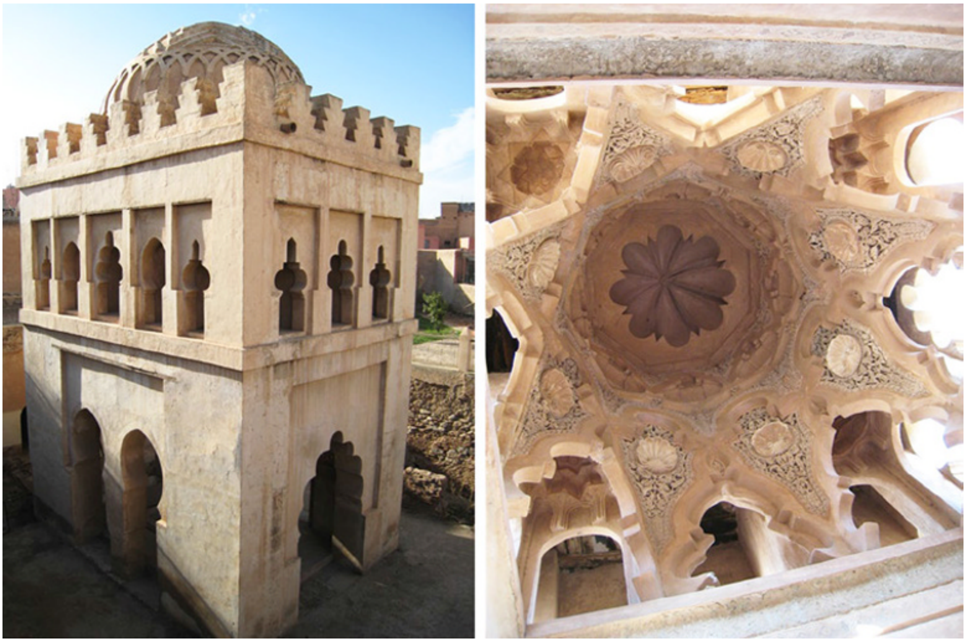

FIGURE 14.2 Qubbat al-Barudiyyin, exterior and interior dome, Marrakesh. Source: Abigail Balbale. Reproduced with permission.

mosques of the Aghlabids in Qayrawan (ninth century) and the Umayyads in Cordoba (tenth century) – complemented by new decorative forms imported from the Islamic East. Emphasizing its Andalusian parallels, the Qubba's interior vault has been compared to the ribbed dome above the mihrab of the Great Mosque of Cordoba; it is furthermore carved with dense stucco vegetal ornamentation (Rosser-Owen 2014: 172–173). The depth of the carving on the lower levels of stucco ornamentation – similar to what Bloom calls the "three-dimensional style" also used by the Almoravids in the mosques of Tlemcen and al-Qarawiyyin and on the *minbar* of the Kutubiyya – may have been an Almoravid innovation, although Bloom suggests that this was imported from a no longer extant Cordoban tradition (Bloom 1998: 23). The *muqarnas* elements and the cursive inscriptions, and the use of four framing domes around the central dome may rather have been adapted from the east (Necipoğlu 1995: 101; Tabbaa 2008).

While its function is debated (see Bloom 1998; Tabbaa 2008), the Qubba's *muqarnas* cells are among the first such forms in the Islamic West. In North Africa, only the Manar Palace of the Qalʿa Bani Hammad in central Algeria had previously used *muqarnas*-like forms (*c.* mid-eleventh century). Earlier uses of *muqarnas* elements have been documented in Nishapur and at the carved stucco dome of the mausoleum of Imam Dur in Samarra (*c.* 1085) (Necipoğlu 1995:

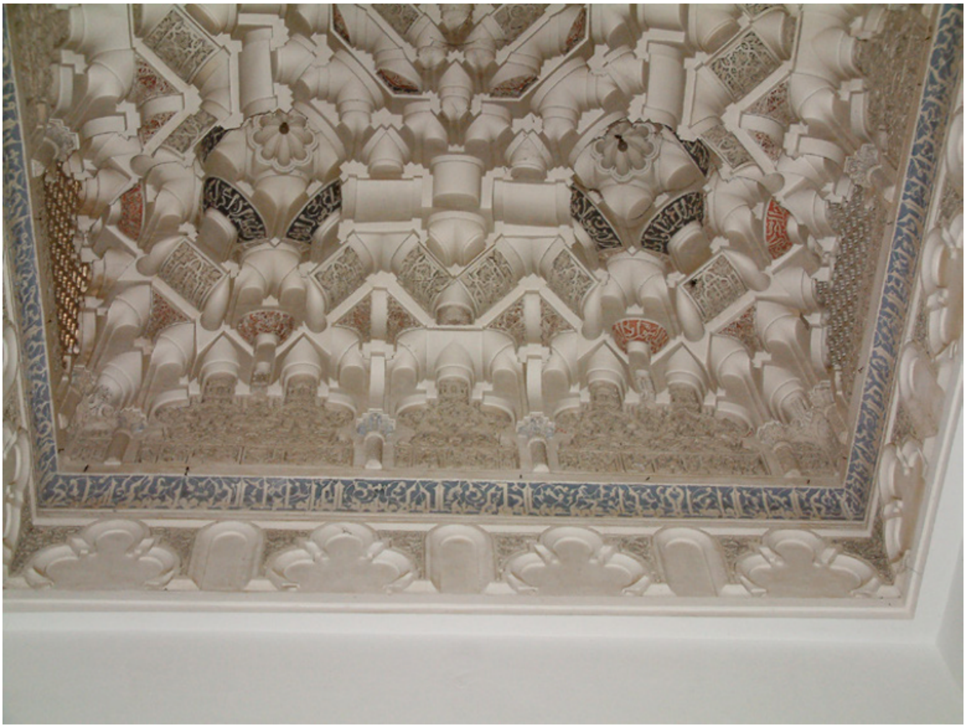

FIGURE 14.3 Rectangular *muqarnas* vault, al-Qarawiyyin Mosque, Fez. Source: Mariam Rosser-Owen. Reproduced with permission.

107, 120, 349; Tabbaa 1985). Whether this form originated, as it has been argued, in northeastern Iran in the tenth century, or Iraq, or North Africa in the eleventh, it is clear that North Africa was one of the earliest loci of *muqarnas* construction, and the Almoravids among its first champions (Tabbaa 1985). The Almoravid ruler ʿAli ibn Yusuf oversaw the construction or renovation of several monuments that used *muqarnas*, creating a series of plaster *muqarnas* vaults over the central aisle of al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez (renovated between 1132 and 1142–1143) and constructing a dome in front of the mihrab that rests on *muqarnas* squinches at the Great Mosque of Tlemcen (1136). The rectangular plaster *muqarnas* vault in al-Qarawiyyin Mosque (Figure 14.3), which culminates in three rows of eight-pointed stars, closely parallels the form of the wooden *muqarnas* ceiling of the Norman Cappella Palatina in Sicily. The ceiling of the Cappella Palatina was also built in the 1130s or 1140s, and David Knipp argues that it was constructed by Almoravid craftsmen and only later painted with figurative scenes (Knipp 2011: 572–573).

Qubbat al-Barudiyyin is also the oldest extant monument with cursive monumental epigraphy in North Africa. It was followed shortly thereafter by the Great Mosque of Tlemcen and al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez – exactly the same places where early *muqarnas* appear, all constructed at the same time, during the great building period of the late Almoravids (roughly 1117–1143). Similar cursive inscriptions proliferated in the Islamic East during roughly this period, reflecting a desire to make the Qurʾan easily accessible to all literate peoples, and inscriptions in the style of the Abbasid east may have constituted a visual homage to the caliphate (Tabbaa 2001: 60).

The Almoravids merged these architectural elements adopted from the east with forms from al-Andalus and North Africa, thereby creating a distinctive synthesis. Like the ribbed dome of the Aghlabids at Qayrawan, which may have inspired both Cordoban Umayyad and Almoravid versions, the square minaret of Qayrawan (836) set the form of all later minarets in the Islamic West, including those of the Umayyads of Cordoba, Almoravids, and Almohads. Similarly, the use of a T-shaped plan for mosque architecture, with an axial nave perpendicular to the mihrab and a wider bay along the mihrab wall, which was first introduced by the Abbasids in the Mosque of Abu Dulaf in Samarra, was adopted by the Aghlabids (see Guidetti, CHAPTER 5) and later by the Almoravids and their successors. At al-Qarawiyyin Mosque, ʿAli ibn Yusuf created this characteristically North African T-shaped form by building a wider central aisle and extending the prayer hall to the south. In reconstructing this southern qibla wall, ʿAli ibn Yusuf was also following the model of al-Hakam II's extension of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in 962–966, and the columns flanking the entrance to the mihrab were topped by ninth- and tenth-century Umayyad capitals. Similar spolia have been discovered in several other Almoravid contexts, and Rosser-Owen argues that this reuse of Cordoban material constituted a claim to the mantle of authority in the west (Rosser-Owen 2014). The arts of the Almoravids appear to have been formed in conversation with the art and architecture that they encountered in Taifa al-Andalus as well: see, for example, the shared polychromatic and exuberant ornamentation of the Aljafería Palace of Saragossa (1049–1081) and the mosques of Tlemcen and al-Qarawiyyin, both expanded by ʿAli ibn Yusuf.

This imbrication of multiple geographic and cultural spheres is particularly well illustrated by Almoravid textiles. Under the Almoravids, the port city of Almería in southeastern Iberia became a center for the production of brocaded lampas-weave silks, embossed with gilded leather to highlight animals in roundels and Arabic inscriptions. The iconography consists primarily of noble animals – peacocks, lions, eagles, and fantastical creatures – enclosed in beaded or pearled roundels, reminiscent of Sasanian and Byzantine motifs. In some cases, like the textile said to have been used as the shroud of San Pedro de Osma (d. 1109), Kufic Arabic inscriptions suggested that the textile was produced in Baghdad, even though distinctive spelling and the particularity of materials and techniques reveal that it was, in fact, produced in the western Mediterranean (Partearroyo 1992: 106). This once again indicates the cultural capital that the Abbasid center still had in the century before its destruction by the Mongols in 1258.

Most of the Almoravid textiles that survive today were discovered in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries in Christian tombs or reliquaries in northern Spain – a testament to their importance and value beyond the lands of Islam. This is further highlighted by the frequent mention of Almería silks in medieval French literature (Kinoshita 2004). And echoes of these textiles and their iconography appear in architecture constructed for Christian patrons, like the carved stucco ornamentation on the ceiling of the thirteenth-century cloister of the Cistercian monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos, which presents peacocks within roundels surrounded by well-wishing aphorisms in Arabic.

The Almohads

In the second quarter of the twelfth century, the Almoravid state came under pressure from a movement known as the Almohads (from *al-muwahhidun*, or Unitarians). The Almohad movement was supported by the Masmuda tribe of the High Atlas Mountains, who accused their Sanhaja predecessors of decadence. Following the religious teachings of an enigmatic messianic figure named Ibn Tumart (d. 1130), the Almohads would conquer Marrakesh in 1147, take control of the gold trade across the Sahara, and then win all of the Maghrib and al-Andalus. After Ibn Tumart's death, his successors would rule as caliphs, challenging the claims to the caliphate made by the Umayyads, Abbasids, and Fatimids, by asserting a return to Islam's roots. The Almohads adopted elements of pro-Abbasid Sunni culture that had been introduced to the region by the Almoravids, alongside earlier North African and Andalusian traditions, while inventing new forms that reflected their own theological and philosophical perspective. Ibn Tumart claimed both a Berber and an Arab genealogy, and his movement presented a novel attempt to synthesize Arabo-Islamic and Berber identities. The Almohads instituted a new liturgy and call to prayer in the Berber language and created a new set of holy books written by their Berber *mahdi* (messiah, i.e., Ibn Tumart). Moreover, as Maribel Fierro has shown, they presented the Berber heartland as a new Hijaz which had to be purified of non-Muslims just as the Hijaz in Arabia and its sacred cities of Mecca and Medina had been (Fierro 2000: 231). The Almohads were so successful in bringing the previously marginalized Berbers into a central messianic role that nearly all the successive regimes of the Maghrib referred to the Almohads explicitly or implicitly in the construction of their legitimacy.

The Almohads came to power in a movement largely directed against the perceived excesses of the Almoravids, accusing the latter's subjects in one letter of "sacrificing their religion (*din*) for their material life (*dunya*)" (Lévi-Provençal 1928: 4). Their art and architecture are generally described as austere in relation to that of their predecessors, in part because of the numerous written records of their destruction or whitewashing of Almoravid structures. Chronicles record that the Almohads demolished all of the mosques of Marrakesh because they were incorrectly oriented toward Mecca, and that the people of Fez preemptively covered with whitewash the polychromatic decoration of the al-Qarawiyyin Mosque out of fear the night before the entrance of the Almohad ruler (Torres Balbás 1949: 9). The Almohads also destroyed Almoravid inscriptions in Fez, Marrakesh, and Tlemcen (Martínez Núñez 2005: 6). The mosque and palace that the Almoravids built in their capital Marrakesh were both demolished, leaving Qubbat al-Barudiyyin as the only remnant of their rule. By destroying the structures of their predecessors, the Almohads presented a break with the past and a new focus on pious austerity which combined aspects of Sunni traditionalism with new messianic and Sufi ideals. Their turn against luxurious ornament parallels the contemporary movement toward asceticism in architecture among the Cistercians in France (Necipoğlu 1995: 101).

In addition to whitewashing or demolishing Almoravid monuments, the Almohads embarked on a substantial building campaign befitting their claim to the caliphate. Their earliest structures combined wide expanses of unadorned white plaster with zones of geometric ornament in subdued colors and invocation-like inscriptions. The mosque at Tinmal (1154), the Almohad spiritual capital in the Atlas Mountains, was made up of eight bays of tall pointed arches, constructed of sandstone brick and coated with a thin layer of white plaster. At periodic intervals, the plaster was carved with delicate geometric and vegetal patterns. In front of the mihrab was a dome filled with *muqarnas*, much like the dome fronting the mihrab at the Almoravid Mosque of Tlemcen.

Although the Almohads rejected the authority of earlier caliphates, as well as the piety of their Almoravid predecessors, their architecture appropriated many of their forms to create a visual language appropriate for a new western caliphate (Rosser-Owen 2014). Like the Almoravids, the Almohads used Cordoban Umayyad columns and capitals to frame the most central portions of their most important mosques. For instance, at the Kutubiyya Mosque, constructed by the first Almohad caliph ʿAbd al-Mu'min in the mid-twelfth century, Andalusian columns and capitals flank the mihrab (Rosser-Owen 2014: 183). They also adopted *muqarnas* domes, cursive scripts, and geometric arabesques, which for the Almoravids had evoked the Sunni authority of the Abbasids. But for the Almohads, these elements may have had different associations, as forms befitting a caliphate, and, by virtue of their century of use in North Africa, as indigenous markers of a "sense of place."

Almohad iconography was remarkably consistent across media, characterized by geometric interlace and repetitive inscriptions, whether in architecture, or on silks, carved and inlaid wood objects, and metalwork. Placed alongside their sponsorship of philosophy and Sufism, Almohad cultural production can be seen as an expression of their ideology, focused on the unity of God (*tawhid*), rationalism, and a meditative Sufi practice. Their neo-Aristotelian vision of Islam saw reason and logic as the ultimate proof of God's existence, while neo-Platonic elements (inspired by the pantheistic monism of Plotinus and others) conceived of God as

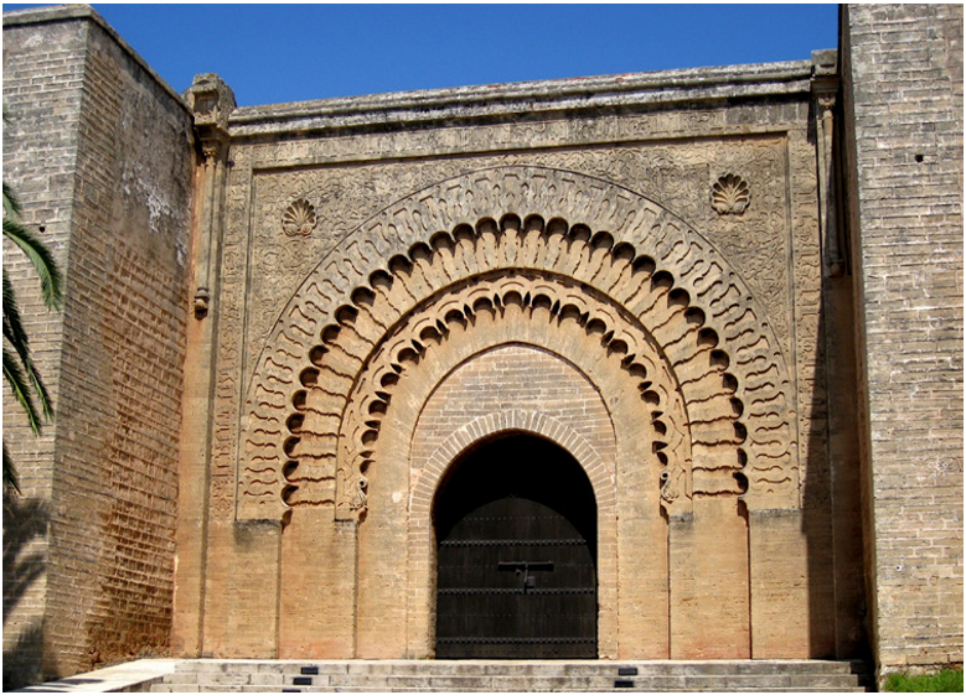

Figure 14.4 Bab al-Ruwah, Rabat. Source: Jessica Streit. Reproduced with permission.

present in everything (Fletcher 1991). These two strands of Almohad thought gave rise to the flourishing of both philosophy and Sufism under their authority, with figures such as Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185), Averroes (d. 1198), and Ibn ʿArabi (d. 1240) developing new approaches to Islamic theology that would revolutionize the Islamic Middle Period. The geometric patterns so ubiquitous in Almohad contexts might simultaneously resonate with the rationalism of God's universe and the meditative practice of Sufism (Necipoğlu 1995: 103–104).

Almohad architecture also emphasized fighting *jihad* against infidels, including impious Muslims. In the 1190s, the caliph Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub al-Mansur built the ramparts and gates of Rabat (*ribat al-Fath*, or Fortress of Victory), which he planned as his dynasty's new capital. The Almohads deserted the city after Yaʿqub's death, and its ramparts and gates are a particularly well-preserved example of Almohad fortifications. One gate in particular, the Bab al-Ruwah (Figure 14.4), is noteworthy for its program of inscriptions, which explicitly enjoins the good and forbids evil (*al-amr bi-ʾl-maʿruf wa-ʾl-nahi ʿan al-munkar*, from Qurʾan 3: 106–107 and elsewhere) (Martínez Núñez 2005: 26). This important concept, in theory incumbent upon all Muslims, was a particular favorite of the Almohads, whose founder Ibn Tumart is said to have pointed out the un-Islamic behavior of all those around him even at great personal risk. The inscriptions on Bab al-Ruwah, which frame two sets of polylobed arches that in turn frame the monumental gate, are executed in an angular Kufic. The inscriptions also call for *jihad* against peoples of the book (i.e., Jews and Christians). These two priorities – ensuring the righteous Islamic behavior of Muslims, and attacking Jews and Christians – were central components of Almohad politics and theology. The gate could function as a fortification, as evidenced by the two imposing bastions that flank it on the outside and the four successive bends in the path of the interior guardroom. But it was clearly also meant to be a monumental statement to Almohad subjects. Its spandrel is adorned with carved stucco vegetal motifs, and the arches with interwoven bands of molding. The highly ornamented façade of this gate is more closely related to Fatimid or Abbasid monumental architecture than to any Maghribi precedent, which makes clear sense given the Almohads' caliphal ambitions. Since this gate was constructed in 1197, just two years after the Almohad victory against the Castilians at Alarcos, we could also see it as a victory monument.

Alongside Qurʾanic messages about *jihad* and righteous behavior, Almohad inscriptions consisting of repeating words of praise for God from the Qurʾan hint at their mystical leanings toward Sufism, partly influenced by al-Ghazali (d. 1111), whom legend holds Ibn Tumart met while studying in Baghdad. Their motto, which appears across multiple media and throughout their empire, was *al-hamdu li-llah wahda-hu* (all praise is due to God alone), a phrase used in *dhikr*, that is, the spiritual practice of chanting praises to God. Other similar phrases like *subhan Allah* (glory be to God) and *al-mulk li-llah wahda-hu* (sovereignty is God's alone) appear in architectural contexts. At the mosque at Tinmal, these inscriptions, in Kufic, repeat amidst dense vegetal ornamentation in the cupolas over the antechamber of the mihrab. As Necipoğlu and others have noted in the Timurid–Turkmen context, moving though a space punctuated by repetitive inscriptions praising God provokes a spiritual practice that parallels Sufi *dhikr* (Necipoğlu 1995: 122). Similarly, Almohad silver coins (dirhams) were inscribed with simple phrases that could be read as either statements of creed or repetitive invocations: *Allah rabbuna, Muhammad rasuluna, al-Mahdi Imamuna*, God (is) our Lord, Muhammad (is) our messenger, the Mahdi (is) our Imam (Vega, Peña, and Feria 2002: 267).

Similar *dhikr*-like inscriptions appear on the so-called Puerta del Perdón, the northern entrance to the Almohad Great Mosque of Seville (1172), later replaced by the Gothic Cathedral of Seville (1402–1506). The door is made of plaques of cast copper alloy stamped with vegetal arabesques and inscriptions contained within cartouches, attached to a wooden core (Figure 14.5). Monumental copper alloy objects like these doors were very rare in the Islamic West in this period, in spite of the fact that copper was mined in west Africa. The only similar surviving example is from the Almoravid al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez. At Seville, the Kufic inscriptions are stamped across the surface in a web of hexagons, while *naskh* inscriptions weave around a geometricized plant-like form to create a leaf-shaped handle. The inscriptions on the door repeat "Sovereignty is God's, Permanence is God's" (*al-mulk li-llah al-baqa li-llah*) (Martínez Núñez 2005: 13–14).

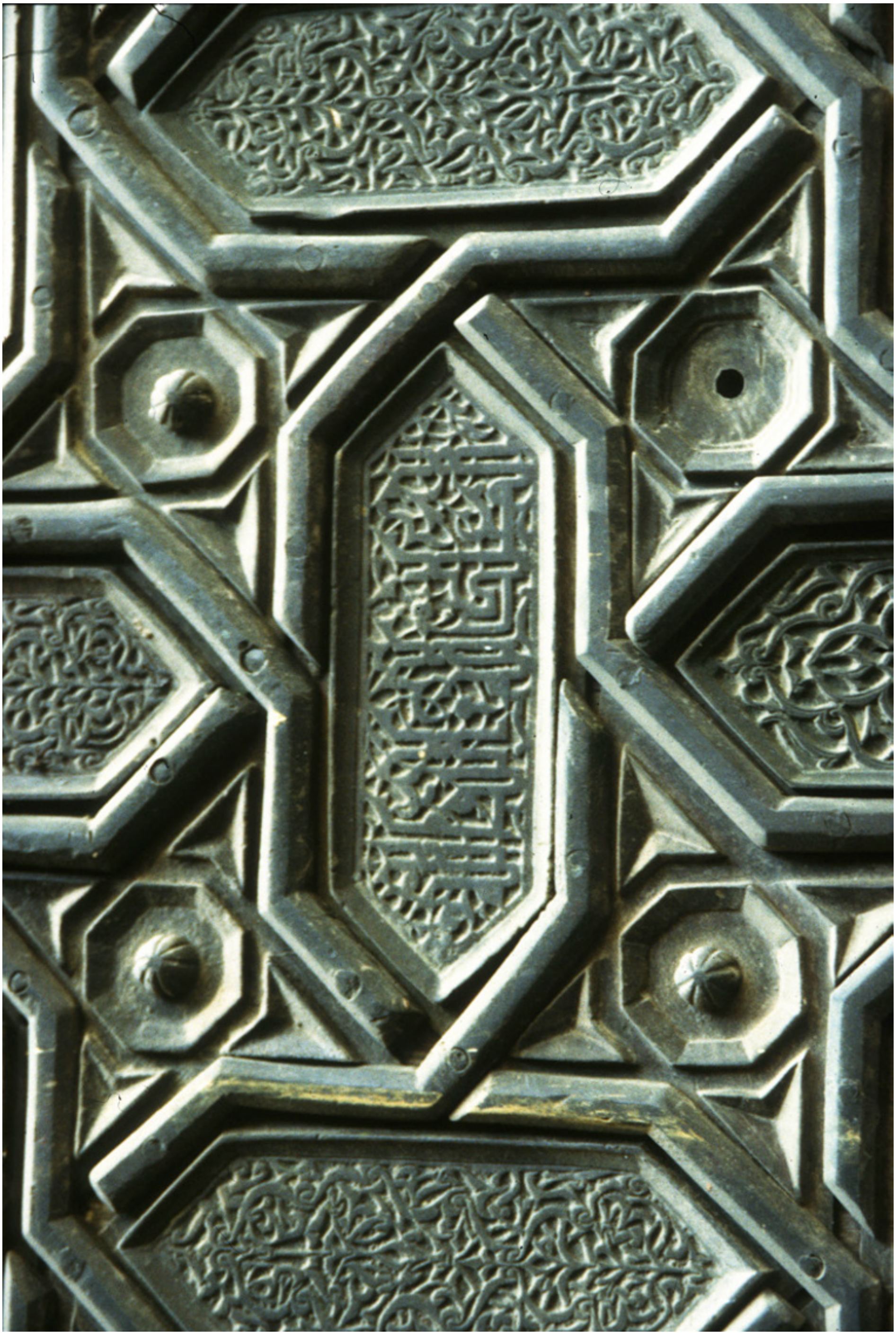

Figure 14.5 Puerta del Perdón, Cathedral of Seville, detail. Source: Abigail Balbale. Reproduced with permission.

The Almohads popularized the use of glazed ceramics in western Mediterranean architecture, as did the Seljuqs in the east around the same time. In North Africa, the earliest surviving use of glazed ceramics in an architectural context is at the Qalʿa of the Banu Hammad in Algeria (late eleventh or early twelfth century), which used floor pavements of glazed tiles. Under the Almohads, the use of glazed ceramics in architecture became much more widespread, both in the Maghrib and in Iberia, especially friezes of mosaic made of geometric fragments of tile that are known in Spanish as *alicatado* (likely from the Arabic *al-qataʿat*, or pieces). The earliest extant use of such ceramics on exterior walls is on the Almohad Kutubiyya Mosque's minaret in Marrakesh (second half of the twelfth century), which is adorned with friezes of ceramic mosaic made on plaster and nailed to wooden slats. On their minaret in the Great Mosque of Seville, now known as the Giralda, the only ceramic used was convex black discs, installed at the peak of the arches above the windowed balconies in the center. The spandrels of the blind arches that decorate the second story of the Torre del Oro (also in Seville, which was raised to the status of co-capital with Marrakesh) were once covered in *alicatado*, made of alternating white and green diamonds (Torres Balbás 1949: 55). Under the Nasrids in Iberia (1232–1492) and the Marinids (1258–1465) in North Africa, this use of ceramic mosaics as architectural decoration (called *zallij* in Arabic) would reach new heights, as seen in the Alhambra of Granada and the madrasas of Fez.

Like their Fatimid predecessors, the Almoravids had eschewed the construction of minarets, but under the Almohads, particularly at their later mosques in Marrakesh, Rabat, and Seville, minarets took on a grand new monumental form, thereby iconically marking their different regime. At Tinmal, their earliest mosque, the Almohads built a low minaret directly behind the mihrab. Later Almohad minarets were much taller (the Kutubiyya minaret is over 250 feet high), and were made of sandstone brick. These minarets are square and punctuated with horseshoe-, multilobed-, or keyhole-shaped windows, decorated with panels covered by webs of interlaced rhomboids known as *sebka*.

As this survey suggests, the Almohads continued many elements of their predecessors' cultural production, with a distinctive focus on a martial asceticism. The Almohads were early sponsors of Sufism, and in their cultural production, knotted geometric patterns, *muqarnas*, and inscriptions became aids for meditative and mystical practices. Necipoğlu (1995) has shown how motifs once associated with the Sunni Revival were divorced from their Abbasid associations in the east after the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258, and were used in Turkmen and Timurid buildings with Sufi connotations. The Almohads dissociated these elements from their connection to the Abbasid caliphate even before its collapse.

A Post-Almohad "Family Resemblance"

In the introduction to their magisterial two-volume collection on the Almohads, Patrice Cressier, Maribel Fierro, and Pierre Guichard write about the creation of a "Berber-Andalusi" civilization, pointing out how its artistic forms lasted long past the fall of the Almohad caliphate, on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar.

> It is enough, to convince oneself, to compare the minaret of the Hafsid Qasba of Tunis or those of the mosques of Tlemcen and Marinid madrasas with the old minarets of Andalusia converted into church steeples, and also with the towers of the mudéjar churches that one finds in the Aragonese countryside. (Cressier, Fierro, and Guichard 2005: xvii, trans. Balbale)

What they call a "family resemblance" that links these monuments corresponds to what earlier French scholars called "hispano-mauresque" art and Spanish scholars referred to as "hispano-musulmán." By reinventing the category as "Berber-Andalusi," instead of beginning with the qualifier "hispano" as both French and Spanish art historians once did, Cressier, Fierro, and Guichard highlight the importance of the Almohads themselves as makers and architects, on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar.

The dynasties that followed the Almohads in North Africa engaged with the theology and cultural production of their predecessors in the construction of their own authority. The Hafsids (1228–1574), who started as Almohad governors of Ifriqiyya but eventually claimed the caliphate themselves, explicitly connected their legitimacy to the Almohads. The Hafsid rulers were from the Masmuda tribe, and were descended from the first caliph of the Almohads. Their art and architecture were often closely connected to Almohad models, as can be seen in their square minaret at the mosque in the Kasbah of Tunis, decorated with interlocking arches.

The Hafsids' rivals, the Zayyanids (1235–1556) and Marinids, also responded to Almoravid and Almohad traditions in their politics and culture. The Zayyanids (or Abd al-Wadids), ruling the central Maghrib from the city of Tlemcen, were Zanata Berbers who had also been Almohad governors, but when they gained power they used the title *amir al-Muslimin* (Commander of the Muslims), invented by the Almoravids to claim caliphal power without challenging the Abbasid caliphate. Thanks to their control of the trans-Saharan trade via Sijilmasa and alliances with Nasrid Granada and the Kingdom of Castile, the Zayyanids managed to maintain power even when the Hafsids and Marinids conspired against them. Their architecture reflects elements of both Almoravid and Almohad buildings, with mihrabs preceded by ribbed domes and square brick minarets adorned with interlocking arches or *sebka*.

The Marinids were a Zanata Berber confederation that won territory from the Almohads and ruled modern Morocco from their capital at Fez from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. They traded gold with Catalan, French, and Italian cities, leading incursions into Spain and broader North Africa. Like the Almohads before them, the Marinids used Berber languages in political and religious contexts. Their cultural production returned to the abundance in ornamentation present in Almoravid and Andalusian Taifa art, while also maintaining certain Almohad elements, such as the distinctive use of a square within a circle on gold dinars. In order to bolster their Sunni legitimacy, and perhaps to counteract the Almohad rejection of Sunni religious sciences, the Marinids constructed madrasas throughout their realm. Unlike madrasas in the east, which frequently held teachers from all four canonical Sunni schools of jurisprudence, the smaller Marinid madrasas held only teachers of the Maliki school, the dominant school in the Maghrib. The courtyards of their madrasas, like Bou Inania in Fez (1351–1356), are characterized by geometric panels of ceramic mosaics on lower walls, surmounted by elaborate vegetal, geometric, and epigraphic bands made out of carved stucco or cedar. The Marinids also encouraged the veneration of *sharif*s, or descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, and constructed mausolea to house their bodies.

The art and architecture of the three Berber dynasties that succeeded the Almohads in North Africa demonstrate the continuities in form that came to characterize the art of the region. This style was not limited to North Africa but also flourished in Granada under the Nasrids (1232–1492), the last Islamic dynasty of al-Andalus, and beyond (see Robinson, CHAPTER 28). In Toledo, the thirteenth-century Church of San Andrés includes a plaster *muqarnas* dome in the Almohad style, and the synagogue of Ibn Shushan (1180), now known as Santa María la Blanca, consists of a hypostyle hall, whitewashed with plaster and adorned with delicate patterns of interlaced stucco. The tall square brick bell towers that dot the Castilian and Aragonese countryside recall the minarets of the Almohads, often incorporating discs of glazed ceramics (like the *bacini*, the Islamic ceramics set on the façades and bell towers of churches in Italy) and decorative brick patterns on the exterior, as in the minaret of the Great Mosque of Seville. *Alicatado* tilework became a standard element of Spanish architecture, as did the elaborate vegetal patterns in carved stucco that cover the walls of Peter I's (King of Castile and Leon, r. 1350–1369) Alcazar Palace in Seville. Recognizing the indebtedness of Nasrid and so-called *mudéjar* art to that of the Berber dynasties of North Africa undercuts the traditional nationalist and colonialist visions of a uniquely "European" al-Andalus and its remarkable achievements.

Conclusion

The study of the west Mediterranean has often been organized by sets of polarized taxonomies – African vs. European, North African vs. Sub-Saharan African, Arab vs. Berber, Muslim vs. Christian. Attempts to fit cultural production into these categories have frequently resulted in misinterpretation, and the sidelining of important connections. In Berber North Africa, Islamization did not erase longstanding cultural and linguistic identities, and the emergence of dynasties like the Almoravids, the Almohads, and their successors, reflected the impulse to assert a powerful identity that embraced both Berber and Islamic elements. For the Almoravids, this consisted of an attempt to integrate themselves more closely with the Islamic East through affiliation with the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad, while for the Almohads, it involved the creation of an alternative caliphate that reified Berber identity. Both dynasties maintained close economic relationships with regions within and south of the Sahara, trading goods in both directions. Yet far more than goods traveled these caravan routes. Conversion to Islam in West Africa came in distinct waves associated with early Kharijite and Almoravid traders as well as Almohad-sponsored itinerant Sufis. The greatest exports of the Berber dynasties to regions lying to their south were Arabic and Islam. The resulting religious and linguistic unity in western Africa facilitated further interaction, and the growth of the Mali (1230–1600) and Songhai (*c.* 1430–1591) empires, with their mosques, universities, scholars, and texts, represented a new attempt to fuse African and Islamic identities.

The cultural forms that the Almoravids and Almohads adopted and created reflected their understandings of spiritual and temporal power, although these meanings shifted over time. Still, there is no reason we should dismiss the possibility that spaces like the Toledan synagogue of Ibn Shushan (1180), with its Almohad-style whitewashed walls covered by carved stucco tracery, was a conscious appreciation of Almohad philosophy and aesthetic sensibilities. The Almohads expelled Jews and Christians from their territory or forced them to convert, yet their approach to reconciling Greek philosophy, mysticism, and Islamic law was deeply influential for the Jewish scholar Maimonides (d. 1204). Similarly, Alfonso X of Castile's (r. 1252–1284) scholarly programs resonated with an Almohad belief in the supremacy of knowledge (Fierro 2009). The visible parallels between the architectural monuments and objects of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa in the later Middle Ages are just one element of a complex culture that did not respect political or religious boundaries. Indeed, Amira Bennison has shown how the growth of sharifism – veneration of the bodies of the descendants of the Prophet – in Marinid Morocco paralleled the development of the cult of holy men in Christian Iberia, especially along the pilgrimage route of Santiago de Compostela, otherwise known as Matamoros, "Moor-killer" (Bennison 2001: 19; see Cummins and Feliciano, CHAPTER 39). Like a text being translated, the materials, ideologies, and forms that traversed the Islamic West were reinvented by each successive dynasty, creating new originals that would be transformed once more. Considering cultural production from this perspective neutralizes the dichotomous emphasis on centers and peripheries, original versions or derivative copies, and instead emphasizes the agency of the patrons and craftsmen who created new forms that, in turn, had their own agency.

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15

Sicily and the Staging of Multiculturalism

Lev A. Kapitaikin

To Korah

The Normans appeared in the fragmented arena of south Italy around the millennium’s turn, and embarked on the conquest of Islamic Sicily (827–1061) beginning in 1060. The Normans’ pragmatic *realpolitik* in engaging the island’s ethnoreligious diversity and political volatility was already manifest in the capture of Palermo, the island’s main metropolis, in 1072. The treaty of surrender stipulated that the Muslims had rights of free worship and the maintenance of their mosques, even allowing them to swear fealty to their Norman overlords upon the Qurʾan, in return for paying tribute (*tributum*, *jizya*) to the Christian state. These conditions mirrored topsy-turvy the conditions of “protected people” in Islamic states (Johns 2002: 33–39; Metcalfe 2003: 32–39; Metcalfe 2009: 99–105). Moreover, the Christian conquerors retained Islamic administrative and fiscal structures, continuing to mint the native Arab quarter-dinar or *tarì* with the addition of their own Arabic titles, and recruiting Muslim guards and soldiers to their armies from as early as 1076 (Johns 2002: 63–69, 268; Metcalfe 2003: 26). With the foundation of the unified kingdom (*regno*) of Sicily–south Italy by King Roger II (r. 1130–1154) in 1130, the eclectic appropriation of Byzantine and Islamic royal trappings became integral to projecting a sublime image of the Sicilian monarchy, modeled after the absolutist-sacral kingships of the East, rather than the weaker feudal monarchies of the Latin West. Roger’s imperial pretensions materialized in repeated raids upon Byzantine territory, a Sicilian protectorate over the weak Zirid and Hammadid emirates in North Africa, and the writing of a world geography accompanied by a large silver globe by his court-geographer

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al-Idrisi. The reigns of Roger's successors, William I (1154–1166) and William II (1166–1189) witnessed – on the one hand – an increasing involvement of Sicily in the Latinate orbit of Europe, and, on the other, a gradual deterioration of the political and economic status of the Muslims of the kingdom, who in the later twelfth century were persecuted and often converted to Christianity. Even then, the Islamicate veneer of the royal court was maintained (Ibn Jubayr 1952: 335–363).

"Fortunate city, endowed with a trilingual people"

"Fortunate city, endowed with a trilingual people" (*urbs felix, populo dotata trilingui*) – hence the Latin panegyrist Peter of Eboli (Petrus de Ebulo 1994: 44–45, fol. 97v, line 56; Petrus de Ebulo 2012: 90–92) epitomized in the late twelfth century the multicultural ambience of Palermo during the twilight days of Norman Sicily (*c.* 1061–1194). Royal panegyrics in Latin, Greek, and Arabic, commissioned by the Sicilian kings and likely performed in the monumental settings created by and for them, played a central role in the staging of the monarchy. King Roger II, the founder of the Sicilian kingdom, appeared dressed in Byzantine imperial regalia in his celebrated coronation mosaic in the Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio in Palermo (known as the Martorana), but the kingdom's ceremonial also involved Latin and Islamic features. His grand vizier George of Antioch (d. 1151) reputedly "veiled Roger from [his] subjects, and arranged for him to dress in clothes like the Muslims'… process, preceded by horses adorned with saddles of gold and silver … with the parasol (*al-mizalla*) above him and the crown upon his head" (Johns 2002: 82). The parasol, a symbol of authority, is alleged to have been sent by the Fatimid caliphs as a gift to the Norman kings of Sicily (Johns 2002: 265).

Glimpses into Sicily's Islamicized court are afforded by a few illustrations in Peter of Eboli's, *Book on Sicilian Affairs* (*Liber ad honorem Augusti sive de rebus Siculis*) from 1196. One illustration pictures the ailing King William II (r. 1166–1189) tended by his Arab physician (*achim medicus*) and astrologer both turbaned, while another illustration presents the trilingual royal chancery with pairs of scribes identified by inscriptions as "Greek" (*notarii Greci*), "Saracen" (*notarii Saraceni*), and "Latin" (*notarii Latini*) within arches – their ethnic traits being realistically depicted – busy drafting documents (Petrus de Ebulo 1994: 42–43, fol. 97r; 58–59, fol. 101r; Petrus de Ebulo 2012: 87–89; 105–107). Jeremy Johns (2002: 257–283) has argued that the Arabic department of the royal chancery (*diwan*) of Sicily was modeled after the counterpart administration of the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt. All the more extraordinary is the appropriation of Arabic official titulature in the documents and coinage of Sicily's Christian kings – *al-muʿtazz bi-allah* (powerful through God) for Roger II or *mustaʿizz bi-allah* (desirous of power through God) for William II (Johns 2002: 269). Such emulation of Islamic courtly and administrative modes and mores by the Christian monarchs of Sicily was rooted in the historical and sociocultural circumstances underpinning the creation of the kingdom in 1130.

The Muslim presence in Sicily (and Italy) was monumentalized by the celebrated Italian Arabist Michele Amari (1806–1889) in his foundational survey *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia* (Amari and Nallino 1933–1939), which – along with his *Biblioteca Arabo-Sicula* and Sicilian-Arabic epigraphy corpus (Amari 1875–1885; Amari 1971)[1] – remains a cornerstone of "Siculo-Arabic studies," even by modern standards of rigor. Yet the Amarian nostalgic concept of Norman Sicily as a "lost haven" of ethnoreligious cohabitation and toleration was criticized as naive and simplistic by modern historians like Henri Bresc, Hubert Houben, Jeremy Johns, and Alex Metcalfe. Making use of hitherto unexploited charters, administration records, and feudal registers (*jaraʾid* or *platea*), they advanced a more nuanced view of Sicily's religious pragmatism in which institutions of the Norman elite were negotiated and adapted to the island's Greek and Muslim populations, who by far outnumbered the Latin conquerors in a complex process of what Karla Mallette (2005: 3) describes as "Christian ventriloquism of Muslim cultural practices." Superficially, the treatment accorded by the Norman conquerors of Sicily to the island's Muslim population might recall the situation in the Iberian Peninsula during the "Reconquista," especially after the conquest of Toledo (1085), when a sizable Muslim population ("Mudejars") was incorporated into the Christian realm. But unlike Sicily, the processes of religious assimilation and transculturation in Spain were more deep-rooted and spanned a longer period. Nor was there in Spain, as in Sicily, a comparable large-scale appropriation of Islamic cultural and administrative practices and Arab language by the Christian ruling elites.

Unfortunately the study of visual and material culture of Norman Sicily lags far behind its historical and cultural explorations, so that extensive syntheses in studies of Sicilian arts of this period – and particularly their "Islamic" facets – are virtually unavailable. French and English theoreticians of the later eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries who studied Sicilian architecture – like Henry Gally-Knight, J.-P. Girault de Prangey, and their Sicilian follower Duke of Serradifalco – were fixated on the *pointed arch*, construing Sicily as "the missing link" in a chain of transmission of this and other "Oriental" motifs to medieval Christian Europe (Tomaselli 1994: 19–45). However, consideration of the "Islamic component" in the architecture of Norman Sicily should have involved the architecture of pre-Norman Sicily, in order to determine what the Christian conquerors inherited from the Muslims of the island, and what they imported from the Islamic Mediterranean and beyond. Unfortunately, answering that query is hindered by an almost total lacuna of monumental architecture from the 200 years of Muslim domination (827–1060) of the island before the arrival of the Normans (Galdieri 2000). The sole mosque known from medieval Sicily was unearthed in Segesta (western Sicily) and dates from the Norman period (second half of twelfth century), but its simple rectangular layout and rudimentary rubble construction make of it an unlikely proxy for the lost Islamic religious architecture of the island (Galdieri 2000: 68–70, fig. 8). The disputed "Arab" dating of the baths of Cefalà Diana (between Palermo and Agrigento) was revised in a recent archaeological excavation by Alessandra Bagnera and Annliese Nef to the second half of the twelfth century. A potential explanation of this lacuna may be that the Normans gradually razed the Islamic monuments, or alternatively, restructured and adapted them for their use, similarly to what occurred to mosques in reconquered Spain, or conversely, to churches in Palestine after Saladin's "Reconquista." But unlike those regions, in Sicily there is no evidence for the Normans engaging in systematic destruction of Islamic monuments; on the contrary, the reception of these was marked by aesthetic appreciation and assimilation on the part of the Christian conquerors, which might suggest that they disappeared later on (Galdieri 2000: 49). The contribution of archaeology to our knowledge of Sicily's art and architecture is limited, as yet, focusing on rural sites like Piazza Armerina where continuity between Arab and Norman phases was detected, or burials, such as the tenth- to eleventh-century coastal cemeteries excavated in Palermo (Bagnera 2013: 84–85, fig. 3.2). All too often, the major obstacle posed by the absence of pre-Norman Islamic architecture in Sicily is bypassed by obfuscating references to monuments as *arabo-normanni*. It is symptomatic that the authoritative synthesis of Sicilian architecture by Giuseppe Bellafiore (1990) should be titled, *Architettura in Sicilia nella età Islamica e normanna (827–1194)*, while in effect dealing mostly with twelfth-century Norman architecture, and providing little proof of continuity between Islamic and Norman eras.

The Iraqi traveler Ibn Hawqal, who visited Palermo in 973 at the peak of the rule of the Kalbids (amirs who reigned under Fatimid suzerainty), pictures its chief congregational mosque (*jamiʿ*) as a grand hypostyle structure with 36 prayer rows, accommodating 200 men in each, whose overall capacity he estimates at over 7000 men. This Friday mosque reputedly contained Aristotle's coffin suspended from a wooden beam to which believers flocked to pray for blessings and rain. The main cathedral of Palermo constructed from 1184 onwards is believed to stand upon the site of Palermo's Friday mosque, incorporating in the present-day Incoronata chapel some of its scanty architectural fragments, which are, however, insufficient to determine its architectural style (Bellafiore 1990: 122–124; Bagnera 2013: 65–67). Besides the Friday mosque, Ibn Hawqal put the amount of mosques in Palermo at an extraordinary number of over 300 (1938–1939: 118–120), likely intending both public mosques and private oratories. "Epigraphic columns" reused as spolia in Norman period churches of Palermo, their shafts adorned in typical Maghribi fashion with Qurʾanic passages, may have originated from some of these mosques and oratories of Arab and Norman Palermo (Gabrieli and Scerrato 1979: 124, 327, figs. 106–108, 132, 179). One of them, inscribed with Qurʾan 7:52 within a flat mihrab design and inbuilt into the fifteenth-century southern portico of Palermo's cathedral (Figure 15.1), is all but certain to originate from that city's Friday mosque. While such reuse of Muslim spolia in Christian churches lends itself easily to triumphalist readings, in the Sicilian context it is more likely to connote linguistic and visual continuities between the Islamic and Norman periods.

The most significant remains of Islamic period monumental architecture to date come from Palermo, where they underlie subsequent Norman buildings. The Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti (*c.* 1132–1148) incorporates an "Arab Hall": a

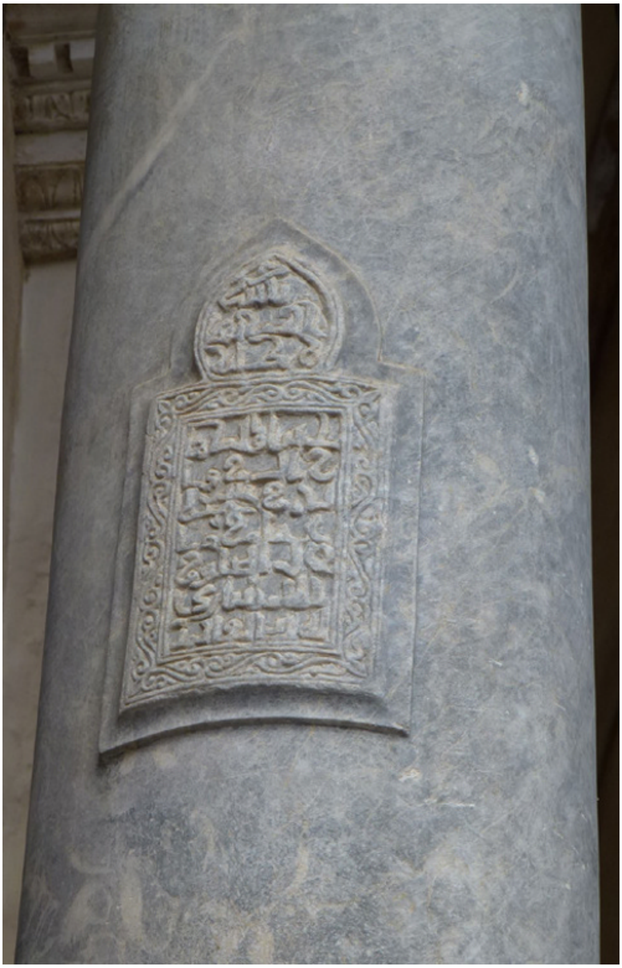

Figure 15.1 Spolia column from Arab mosque with Qurʾan 7:52 (tenth–eleventh century?) Palermo Cathedral, south portico. Source: Lev A. Kapitaikin. Reproduced with permission.

roughly square enclosure with a longitudinal six-bay hall (17.5 × 5.6 m) on one side (Bellafiore 1990: 130–132, pls. 125–128; Tomaselli 1994: 126–135, figs. 80–100). The building's extra-urban location and alignment make it unlikely that it served as a hypostyle mosque, as sometimes claimed, whereas the reclusive architecture with slit windows in small blind niches suggests an alternative commercial or military function, such as a *funduq* (caravanserai) or *ribat* (fort). In addition, archaeological excavations held recently in the Favara-Maredolce Palace apparently confirm Amari's thesis that this Rogerian palace in the outskirts of Palermo was built upon the remains of a Muslim fort or palace, *qasr Jaʿfar* of the Kalbid amir Jaʿfar (r. 998–1019), whose lower courses of large square blocks are preserved on three sides of the Norman structure (Barbera, Boschiero, and Latini 2015: 23, 114–117).

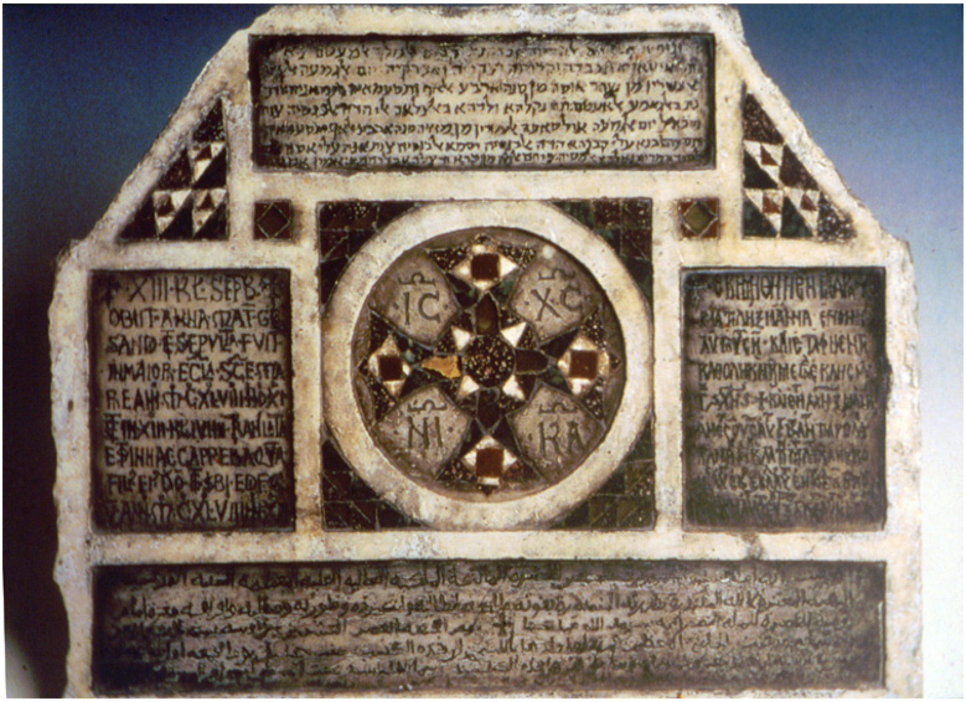

Figure 15.2 Epitaph with quadrilingual inscription of Anna, mother of "royal priest" Grisandus, 1149, white marble with *opus sectile* marble and glass tesserae inlays (40 × 32 cm), from San Michele Arcangelo, Palermo, Museo della Zisa. Source: Alex Metcalfe, Department of History, Lancaster University, UK. Reproduced with permission.

The few multilingual monumental inscriptions originating mostly from Palermo are usually interpreted as royal propaganda, remnants of a multiculturalism instigated and orchestrated by the Norman court (Amari 1971: 29–39, no. II; 63–66, no. VIII; 201–214, nos. XXVI–XXVIII). Yet, one of these, the quadrilingual epitaph of Anna, mother of the royal cleric Grisandus dated 1149 (Figure 15.2) (Amari 1971: 201–212, no. XXVII; Andaloro 2006: vol. I, 518–523, 775–778, no. VIII. 7 b), demonstrates the slippery nature of religious toleration transformed into propaganda for religious conversion. The epitaph is a white marble plaque opulently decorated with multicolored *opus sectile* inlays, red terracotta and gold glass mosaics, and inscribed with four inscriptions – Latin (left), Greek (right), Arabic (bottom), and Judeo-Arabic (Arabic written in Hebrew script; seen at top) in recessed panels on its sides. These inscriptions commemorate a particular event – the transfer of Anna's remains from her initial burial in Palermo Cathedral to a funerary chapel constructed by her son Grisandus in the Church of San Michele Arcangelo, in whose wall the epitaph was set and remained until about 1866. And yet, the monument's centerpiece is not the informative inscriptions but the vibrant cross dominating visually the scripts and drawing them towards the triumphant Greek motto "Jesus Christ Conquers"

(IC/XC/NI/KA) interspersed between its four arms. The audacious missionary propaganda of the epitaph was associated with Roger's efforts towards the end of his life to convert Muslims and Jews to Christianity. In this context, the apparition of Judeo-Arabic may have to do with the situation of San Michele Arcangelo near the old Jewish quarter and its synagogue, implying that Anna's monument was crafted specifically to address Palermo's Jews or Jewish converts (Rocco 1969: 272–273).

Analogous multicultural complexity underlies Roger's celebrated royal mantle that now is preserved in Vienna (Figure 11.7) (see Sokoly, CHAPTER 11). The mantle was showcased with other Sicilian regalia, textiles, and luxury artwork in the milestone exhibition *Nobiles Officinae* held in 2003–2004 in Vienna and Palermo, which highlighted at the same time the problematic provenance of many of such alleged "Sicilian" artifacts (Andaloro 2006). Relevant controversies include the disputed issue of the chronology of Sicily's "royal workshops" and whether they were modeled on the Islamic stately *tiraz* (inscribed textile) workshops or their Byzantine imperial equivalents, the *ergasterion*. Embroidered in the "royal treasury/wardrobe" (*khizana*) of Palermo in the year 528 (1133–1134), as recorded in its inscription, the half-circle cut of Roger's mantle is typically Latin, whereas the red samite silk of which it was manufactured might be an import from Byzantium (Andaloro 2006: vol. 1, 44–50, no. I.1; Grabar 2005: 30–48). The garment's exterior – presenting a pair of rampant lions heraldically adossed on the sides of majestic palm tree to overcome a pair of stretched camels – was associated with Islamic, perhaps astrological, iconography with the twist of replacing the usual prey of gazelle or an ox by the unusual camel to stand for the Muslims of Sicily and/or North Africa subjugated by the Norman monarchic lion (Kapitaikin 2011: 349–353).

The rallying of languages to the cross in Anna's epitaph or the diverse traditions ensconced in Roger's mantle with its Norman lion emblems epitomize the nature of Sicilian arts as "hybrid" or "eclectic," with elements juxtaposed and often manipulated by royal propaganda for producing original yet essentially aesthetically incipient artworks; their constituents gravitating in transcultural and transvisual flux towards their Christian and Islamic models. This characterization of Sicilian arts as germinal or embryonic cannot but be tentative, and could be explained by the relatively brief span of cohabitation of Muslims and Normans on the island. Yet it also might conceivably be revised as more data on the arts of Islamic Sicily before the Normans become available. Moreover, it might account for the diversity of visual formulations both in the media discussed above and those analyzed below: architecture and its decoration, painting and the portable arts.

The Royal Palaces

The palaces of the Christian kings of Sicily find numerous parallels in the palace architecture of the Islamic world. All but one (the Caronia) lie within Palermo's Conca d'Oro – the conch-shaped valley rimmed by high mountains surrounding cultivated fields, fruit-tree groves, and abundant water resources (Bellafiore 1990: 43–68, 142–159; Meier 1994). Rather lyrically, Ibn Jubayr (1952: 348) portrays Palermo's suburban palaces as "disposed around the higher parts [of Conca d'Oro], like pearls encircling a woman's full throat. The King roams through the[ir] gardens and courts for amusement and pleasure." Some scenic planning must have been involved in determining the design and location of the palaces and parks for them to have enjoyed spectacular vistas across Palermo's bay and the rugged mountains around it. The luxuriant landscape of the Palermitan valley was continuously reconfigured from the Islamic period onwards, incorporating vast extra-urban parks and hunting reserves in which these suburban palaces were set (Bellafiore 1996; Bresc 1994; Caselli 1994).

Textual sources speak of two main parks, "the Old Park" and "the New Park," but neither their chronology nor their extent are clear entirely (Caselli 1994: 187–190). The parks were enclosed by perimetral walls, planted with palm groves and orchards of orange, lemon, and other fruit trees, and landscaped with artificial lakes and water basins fed by hydraulic systems drawing upon natural springs, channels, and subterranean tunnels (in the tradition of the Near-Eastern *qanat* and the Maghribi *khettara*s). Both natural and artificial scenery was reconfigured to symbolically invoke the Qurʾanic paradise, as luxuriant "gardens beneath which rivers flow" – materialized terrestrially for the Christian monarchs (Bresc 1994: 250–253; Metcalfe 2009: 244–245). The Zisa Palace in Palermo explicitly proclaims that paradisiacal meaning in the poem framing the entrance to its fountain hall (Figure 15.3): "this is paradise on earth (*jannat al-dunya*) made manifest!" (Amari 1971: 77–82, no. X).

Specific analogies to the landscapes of Sicilian royal parks can be found, as much else in Sicilian architecture, in the central and western Maghrib. Jonathan Bloom (2007: 21, 37–40, 190) points out that large pools formed the focal feature of palaces in North Africa from the ninth century onwards. While they do not seem to have played the same role in the Fatimid architecture of Cairo, these features were common in Abbasid palatial architecture in both Baghdad and Samarra, as well as the Madinat al-Zahraʾ Palace of the Umayyad caliphs of Spain. The flamboyant lake pavilions of the Sicilian palaces may be prefigured in a pleasure pavilion, remains of which still exist amidst the water reservoir of the Aghlabid dynasty (vassals of the Abbasids 800–909) in Qayrawan. Further to the west, *agdal* parks of Almohad Morroco (1130–1269) – the term *agdal* denoting in Berber language "a meadow enclosed by a stone wall" – offer even closer analogies to the Sicilian parks in their extra-urban, scenic setting at the foothills of steep mountains and artificial landscaping with extensive lakes or reservoirs, pavilions, loggias, islets, and the like (Bellafiore 1996: 5–41). By contrast, the "New Park" of Altofonte near Palermo, which was enclosed with a surrounding wall and populated artificially with game of deer, roebucks, and wild boars, invites comparisons with the vast game preserves and "royal forests" of Normandy and England

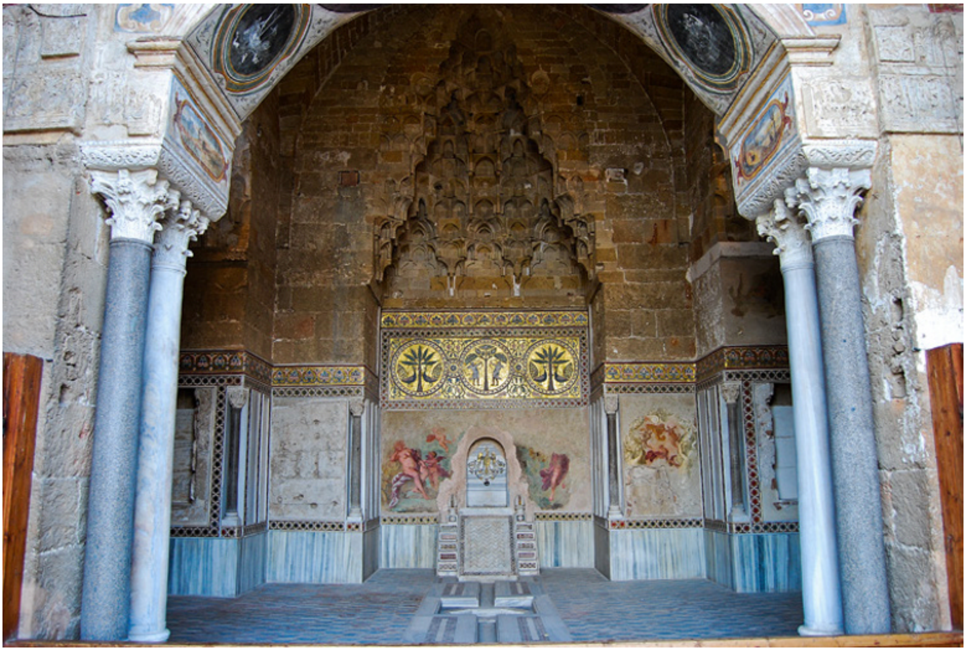

FIGURE 15.3 Fountain hall (*shadhirwan*) of the Zisa Palace (restored), Palermo, *c.* 1165–1180. Source: Simone Saletti, Siena. Reproduced with permission.

(Caselli 1994: 189). In late twelfth century, these parks formed a continuous green belt around Palermo possibly known as the "Genoard" – from the Arabic *jannat al-ard* (terrestrial paradise) (Petrus de Ebulo 1994: 46–47, fol. 98r; Petrus de Ebulo 2012: 91–93). The effective transformation of the Palermitan countryside into a royal preserve formed an integral part in the construction of an exalted image of the Sicilian monarchs as God's viceroys on earth, in charge of the pacified nature of their "terrestrial paradise." The apparent paradox of an Islamic paradise readied for a Christian lord was mitigated by Christian chapels, single-nave oratories attached to these palaces (Bellafiore 1990: figs. 184, 187, 191, 203).

The royal palaces exhibit a close relationship to the ninth- through eleventh-century architecture of Ifriqiyya (North Africa), and the tenth- through thirteenth-century architecture of Egypt and Syria. The sobriety of palatial façades connoted power and stability engendered by cubic masses of smooth stone and commanding verticality. Serried blind arches of various sizes, framed by multiple voussoirs and sometimes pierced by small windows, alleviated the façades' monotony by creating subtle *chiaroscuro* plays upon them (Bellafiore 1990: 19–68; Johns 1993: 139–145; Mazot 1999). All of these architectural features are equally attested in the tenth- and eleventh-century architecture of the central Maghrib, in Zirid and Hammadid monuments whose taste for stereotomic masonry itself owed much to the surviving Roman and Byzantine monuments in that region.

In her study of Palermitan architecture, Sybille Mazot (1999: 668–669, fig. 3) distinguished between two salient palace types:

1. *The ribat palace* (including the Favara and Altofonte): A low structure with a series of small cells organized in two stories around a courtyard surrounded with cross-vaulted arcades on piers. This type apparently followed the model of the Maghribi *ribat* (fortress-monastery).
2. *The parallelepiped palace* (including the Zisa, Cuba, Uscibene, Caronia): Massive freestanding cuboid edifices with compact interiors recalling palatial pavilions, and high façades articulated with blind arches and lancet windows, which imbue them with the militarized appearance of a fortified keep (*donjon*). At the core of these palaces is a cruciform hall, commonly with three iwan niches on its sides.

The second of these two palace types found in Norman Sicily is distinguished by a symmetrical three-tract layout and inverted-T audience halls, which relate it to tenth- and eleventh-century Zirid, Hammadid, and early Fatimid palaces in North Africa, as well as to Cairene architecture. The Aghlabid palaces of Tunisia are not well preserved, but their extant waterworks that derive from the Abbasid domain may well be suggestive in this regard. The ground floor of the Zisa, one of the Norman palaces in Palermo, appears like a condensed version of the Zirid tenth-century palace of Ashir, western Algeria, recalling also the palace unearthed in the Fatimid capital of Sabra al-Mansuriyya (Johns 1993: 140, figs. 1–2). The Zisa's upper story, the Cuba, and the restored *Sala dei Venti* of Palermo's royal palace present another type of square-shaped, four-columned space. Interpreted either as a reception hall or courtyard, it recalls a type of Syrian and Cairene *qaʿa* hall with iwans facing one another across a sunken central space with fountain (*durqaʿa*). It is contested whether the central space of the Sicilian *qaʿas* was an open-sky courtyard, roofed by a built dome, or alternately, by a wooden lantern in the manner of Mamluk and later Cairene *qaʿas* (Bellafiore 1990: 66–68, 142–143, 151, 154–155, fig. 160).

Iwan niches of palaces would accommodate entrances, fountains, or the king's seat, and were vaulted with stone/stucco *muqarnas* or ribbed "umbrella hoods." Sicilian *muqarnas* hoods (Figure 15.3) belong to decisively Western *muqarnas* types (Garofalo 2010). The ribbed-stilted iwan hoods in the Caronia and Uscibene palaces and the royal chapel of the Favara equally indicate their Maghribi derivation (Bellafiore 1990: 153, 158, fig. 207; cf. Hill and Golvin 1976: 101–102, figs. 148, 151). The niches often accommodated a *shadhirwan* wall fountain (Figure 15.3) – whereby water descended on a corrugated waterslide with zigzag pattern and flowed via an axial water channel into a pool or series of pools set either in the hall itself or in an external pavilion or courtyard. Such a *shadhirwan* fountain was also depicted in a painting of the Cappella Palatina (Palatine Chapel) ceiling in Palermo, datable to the 1140s (Brenk 2010: vol. 2, Atlante 2, fig. 832). Henri Bresc (1994: 249) conceives the whole hydraulic configuration as the simulation of a natural grotto or stalactite cave on a mountain's slope with a natural spring flowing from its inside.

Another of the Norman palaces, the Favara, stood as a peninsular castle projecting into an artificial irregularly shaped lake. A scenic island carved from the rock and planted with palm and fruit trees divided the lake into two basins or "seas," that were invoked in the famous poem by the Arab court poet of the Normans, ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Atrabanishi (i.e., from Trapani): "And the two palm trees like two lovers who choose/as protection from the enemy, a castle well-fortified against them" (Bellafiore 1990: 147–149, figs. 184–190; Mallette 2005: 139–140; Barbera, Boschiero, and Latini 2015). Even more flamboyant was the partly extant Cuba, a compact pavilion on an islet set on a rectangular lake, and accessed via a diminutive bridge. Both surrounded and interpenetrated by waters, its windows on the ground floor overlooked the vast expanse of the lake, creating an illusion of a "floating hall" (Bresc 1994: 249). The most ingenious interior–exterior interplay was realized in the Zisa, which juxtaposed a fountain grotto on the ground floor (Figure 15.3) with a pavilion inside a pool outside the building, feeding on the waters emerging from the interior (Bellafiore 1996: 67–80). Water scenery interlinked buildings axially by means of channels and pools, connecting focal features like audience halls or pavilions, while forging luxurious ambiences for regal *majalis* (audiences) and hunting pastimes, and connoting ideas of royal plenitude and generosity traditional in Islamic cultures.

A different case is that of Palermo's urban palace Palazzo Reale (*castellum superius* or *palatium novum*), whose medieval shape was substantially transformed in rebuildings since the sixteenth century. Textual sources and recent archaeological investigations in the crypt of the royal chapel (the Cappella Palatina) and elsewhere suggest that the Normans constructed their palace upon an earlier Islamic fortress, although this is uncertain (Meier 1994: 37, 143; Sack 2011: 509). The Norman-period palace was apparently structured around three towers, the "Red Tower, the "Greek Tower," and the "Pisan Tower," connected by perimeter walls. Textual sources describe the palace's interior as containing audience halls, royal and female dwellings, as well as royal workshops and the state treasury. As today, the Cappella Palatina occupied the nexus of the whole compound, providing a hinge between its official and private sections (Longo 2011a: figs. 2–4, 8–9). Of the towers, the best preserved is the Pisan Tower (*Torre Pisana*), whose square layout with ambulatory harks back to the eleventh-century *donjon* Qasr al-Manar in Qalʿa Bani Hammad (Algeria), including its functional distinction between upper domed audience hall and vaulted basement, which functioned as a storehouse or dungeon (Bellafiore 1990: 46, 51–52, 142–144). Adjacent to the Pisan Tower lies the "Joaria" building (from Arabic *Jawhariyya*, i.e., "jewel-like"), whose name might allude to the sumptuous mosaics of the *Stanza di Ruggero* hall found inside; the hunting and animal themes of these mosaics were associated with Byzantine and Islamic textiles and portable objects, particularly Andalusian ivories (Knipp 2003–2004). The royal palace was interlinked directly to the cathedral via a covered portico (*Via Coperta*) reminiscent of the passage (*sabat*) between the caliphal *alcázar* and the Great Mosque in Cordoba (Ibn Jubayr 1952: 347; Longo 2011a: 81, fig. 8:16).

A vast open space lay adjacent on the palace's eastern side (currently Piazza della Vittoria), and was referred to by medieval sources either as the "Royal Hall" or "Green Hall" (*aula regia/verde*), or "The Theater" (Arabic *malʿab*). The Theater, as described by both Arabic and Latin sources, was a sort of atrium surrounded by loggias and porticoes and laid with gardens and fountain in its midst. Until being demolished around 1567, it was used for large public gatherings, as two of its depictions in Peter of Eboli's book attest (Ibn Jubayr 1952: 347; Longo 2011a: 62–68, 78–82, 86–95, note 10, figs. 4–5, 8–9; Petrus de Ebulo 1994: 42–43, fol. 97r; 228–231, fols. 141v–142r; Petrus de Ebulo 2012: 86–89, 336–341). Ruggero Longo (2011a: 82) conceives the "Royal or Green Hall" as "a half-open interface … the preferred stage of the theatre of power," that mediated between the palace and the city, and conveyed the sovereign's glory to the populace.

Many scholars conceive the imposing verticality of Sicilian palaces as an essentially foreign trait rooted in northern Gothic tastes (Chisea 1998; Galdieri 2000: 58; Gabrieli and Scerrato 1979: 321–322; Pesez 1998). The articulation of façades with cannular niches and lateral buttresses or turrets is also found in some eleventh-century abbeys of Caen, Normandy, but the formally equivalent elements of Sicilian palaces seem closer to tenth- and eleventh-century Maghribi monuments, for which parallels could be found also in tower belvederes of the Abbasids and the Fatimids. The loftiness of Sicilian palaces may be related to the valorization of height in ekphrases of real and legendary Islamic and pre-Islamic palaces. Ibn Jubayr's description of the royal palace in Palermo as constituted by "mansions like lofty castles with towers hidden in the skies" draws upon such enduring *topoi* of ekphrasis, while also picturing the Sicilian coast as composed of "continuous cultivations and villages … fortresses and strongholds at the tops of the lofty mountains" (Ibn Jubayr 1952: 343, 349). Contrasting solidity and height with natural luxuriance engulfing them from within and without, Sicilian palaces might be conceived as monumental expressions of the royal titles "power" (*ʿizz*) and "loftiness/height" (*ʿulu*) (Johns 2002: 135–136, 269–270), while epitomizing the natural fortitude and plenitude of the Mediterranean bastion island.

Churches and Architectural Decoration

Unlike the fairly uniform palaces, Sicilian churches manifest considerable typological diversity ranging from centralized (Figure 15.4) to basilical plans, with Western (Romanesque-Gothic and Crusader), Middle Byzantine, and Islamic (Maghribi and Egyptian) forms often conjoined in the same building. On this account, Sicilian churches have often been described – somewhat derogatively – as "hybrid" or "eclectic." Indeed, the amalgamation of variable cultural traditions

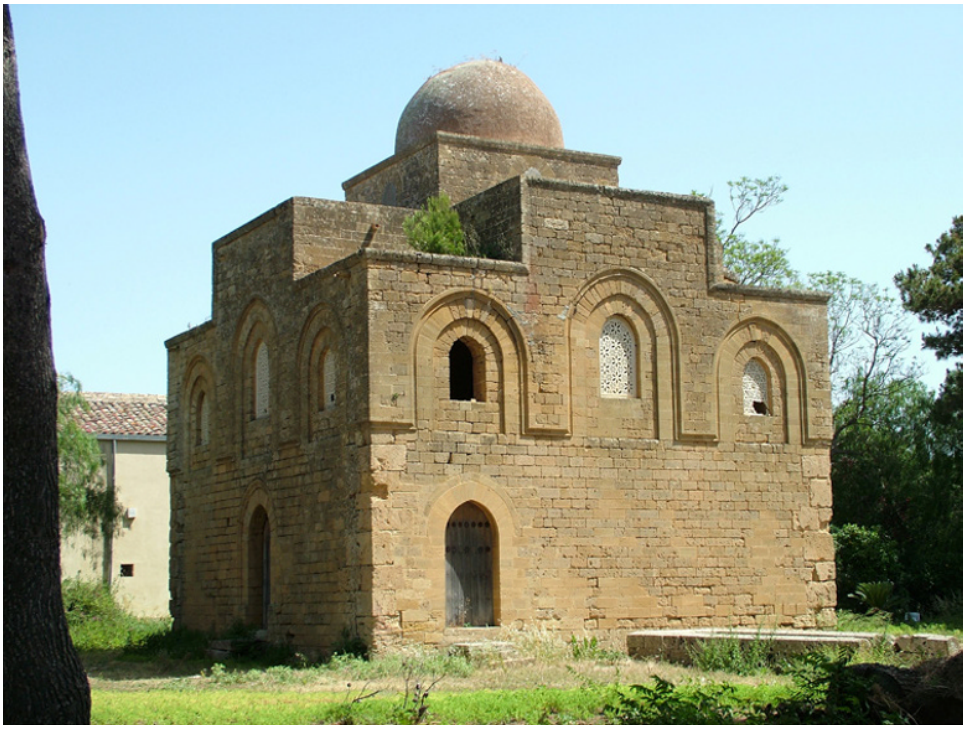

Figure 15.4 SS. Trinità di Delia, Castelvetrano, mid-twelfth century (restored).
Source: http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Castelvetrano_Chiesa_Delia.jpg

often resulted in aesthetically odd buildings, as in the densely spaced, disproportionate domes of the Church of San Cataldo in Palermo. Yet the very willingness of the designers of these monuments to engage in transcultural minglings of forms and decoration testifies to their powers of artistic experimentation and fluidity in forging a distinct "Siculo-Arabic" architectural idiom. Sicilian churches are characterized by two traits. Firstly, they are generated from prismatic or cubic volumes often topped with high bulbous domes (Figure 15.4) conforming thereby to the aesthetics of the Islamic *qubba* or domed space (Bellafiore 1990: 74; and 23, 47, 75). Secondly, they are typified by a common lack of spatial integration between constituent parts, which is especially conspicuous in domed basilicas, such as SS. Pietro e Paolo, Itàla in Val Demone or San Giovanni degli Eremiti and Cappella Palatina in Palermo (Nicklies 2004: 100–102, 110, figs. 5–6).

Unfortunately modern surveys of Norman-period architecture more often tend to catalogue individual monuments rather than formulate underlying aesthetic principles. However, a distinction between two regional traditions of Sicilian architecture can be made: the provincial style of Val Demone at the island's eastern tip and the metropolitan style of Palermo and its environs. Monuments in other parts of Sicily may be feasibly associated with either of these two regional traditions. The chronological relationship between the provincial and the metropolitan styles is a matter of debate. Many scholars posit that Sicilian architecture originated in Calabria in southern Italy, from whence it was brought by the Normans to the island and blended with indigenous Arab traditions, while Nicklies (2004: 100) construes the island's Val Demone region as the cradle of Sicilian architecture, from whence it diffused to Calabria and Palermo. Further comparative studies of Sicilian and southern Italian architectures are needed in order to decide between these two scenarios.

The provincial style of Val Demone extending also to mainland Calabria, recently reexamined by Charles Nicklies (2004), draws primarily on Middle Byzantine architecture in its construction, which alternates red-fired brick with black lava and yellow limestone arranged in decorative patterns but also includes perennial Latinate and Islamic features. The most striking exponent of the Val Demone style is the domed basilica of SS. Pietro e Paolo in Casalvecchio Siculo (f. 1116, restored 1171–1172) (Bellafiore 1990: 100–102, figs. 28–29, 30–38). Islamic features of the Val Demone style include the dome–apse conjunction and the pattern of "interlaced arches," both of which can be associated with Maghribi or Andalusian mosques. Another distinctive feature is the vaulting with triangular- or trumpet-shaped structural *muqarnas*, which appears to recall the type found in Anatolia, northern Syria, and the Jazira (Nicklies 2004: 99, 106–108, 110, figs. 6, 10, 17–19, 21–22).

The metropolitan style of Palermo, as exemplified by the twelfth-century monuments of the Norman monarchy, is characterized by typological diversity, stone masonry, and the utilization of elaborate nonstructural Western-type *muqarnas* recalling that of Maghrib and Spain (Garofalo 2010). The highly finished stone masonry of Palermitan monuments concurs with contemporary Islamic and Romanesque revivals of monumental stone architecture as far as Normandy, North Africa, Fatimid and Ayyubid Syria and Egypt, and Rum Seljuq Anatolia. Even-so, the Romanesque-like uniformity of Palermitan façades (Figure 15.4) might be misleading, since it could have been affected by the modern "revival" (*ripristino*) of these monuments at the hands of two idealist architects and archaeologists, Giuseppe Patricolo (1834–1905) and Francesco Valenti (1868–1953), who refashioned them in nostalgic medievalistic style as a means of galvanizing national Sicilian patrimony (Tomaselli 1994: 14–15, 44–45, 197–199). The original appearance of Palermitan monuments might therefore have been less uniform and polished than they now appear. The high bulbous profile of Palermitan domes and their transition zones with squinch niches typically framed by recesses are closely related to Zirid domes, such as the Bab Bahu dome in the Zaytuna Mosque of Tunis (dated 991), or those of the mosques of Susa and Sfax in Tunisia (Hill and Golvin 1976: 95–96, figs. 111–113, 141; Nicklies 2004: 107–108, fig. 23). Another idiosyncratic feature seen in Palermitan and Val Demone churches is the framing of apses with decorative colonettes, a feature recurring in Maghribi mihrabs, such as that in the ninth-century Aghlabid Friday Mosque of Qayrawan, also in Tunisia (Nicklies 2004: 107, figs. 7, 11, 21–22).

In the Martorana – the palatial chapel and family mausoleum of George of Antioch, Roger's grand vizier (*c.* 1126–1151) – a typically Middle Byzantine cross-in-square layout with mosaics was encased in an Islamic-type cubical domed structure (Ćurčić 1990). Its triple-arched façade recalls one of the eleventh-century Fatimid mausolea at Aswan, or the mosque at the shrine of Sayyida Ruqayya in Cairo (1133) (Bloom 2007: 83–85, fig. 52, left; 146–149, figs. 114, 117), as well as certain twelfth-century mausolea in Damascus. The Martorana's low dome conforms to Byzantine or Crusader aesthetics, yet its architectural cognate SS. Trinità di Delia, Castelvetrano (Figure 15.4) presents a higher dome of Islamic fashion on top of a Greek-cross elevation (Bellafiore 1990: 132, fig. 129). Audacious juxtapositions of divergent traditions like these may have been motivated by the exigencies of these churches having to cater for various populations and liturgies, including Arabic-speaking Christians and converts. The mosaic-faced dome of the Martorana is framed by a wooden frieze painted with a Kufic inscription that spells out the Epinikios hymn of the Greek liturgy in Arabic translation: "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Holy, holy [holy]! … receive our prayer" (Amari 1971: 109–117, no. XXIV; Gabrieli and Scerrato 1979: figs. 117–118; J. Johns trans.). The hymn could well be an echo of actual prayer performed in this church by a community of Arabicized Christians, who were vividly described by Ibn Jubayr (1952: 349–350). That contemporary Arabic sources sometimes term churches *jami*ʿ, a term normally used for Friday mosques, suggests fluidity of norm and form even across confessional lines.

Until about 1160, the façades of churches and palaces, retained a simple appearance, with expanses of masonry soberly articulated by means of recessed arches and niches, accentuated by running cavetto moldings (Figure 15.4). Notwithstanding exceptions (e.g., the interlaced arches in the west façade of Cefalù Cathedral from the 1130s), it is only during the period of William II that ecclesiastical façades acquired extensive sculpted and bichromatic decoration, culminating in the exquisite exteriors of the great cathedrals of Monreale and Palermo and the Martorana campanile (Ćurčić 1990: 52–62, figs. A29–39). While the alternation of materials such as brick, stone, and marble for either or both structural and aesthetic purposes is also attested in Roman, Byzantine, and Carolingian monuments, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, bichromatic façade decoration (known in Arabic as *ablaq*) became widely diffused in the Christian and Islamic Mediterranean (Bellafiore 1990: 84–87). The closest analogies to the bichromatic designs on later Palermitan churches appear to be furnished by the aforementioned tenth-century Bab Bahu dome of the Zaytuna Mosque in Tunis, and the late eleventh- or early twelfth-century decoration in the atrium of Salerno Cathedral and its campanile (1137–1152) in Campania, southern Italy (Gabrieli and Scerrato 1979: fig. 402).

That said, the intersharing of certain patterns between façade decorations and *opus sectile* pavements and dadoes of Sicilian churches could imply the development of a local Palermitan tradition by *marmorarii* engaged on the exteriors and interiors of these monuments. *Opus sectile* pavements and dadoes were eye-catching features of ecclesiastical interiors, like those of the Cappella Palatina, and the churches of the Martorana, San Cataldo, and Monreale in Palermo. The Cappella Palatina's pavements present an organic integration of central or southern Italian curvilinear designs made up of five marble/porphyry discs (*quincunx*) with Islamic "eight-pointed stars" formed by interlaces (Tronzo 1997: 29–43); the latter were related by Jonathan Bloom (2007: 192) to the wooden *minbar* of the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakesh, produced for the Almoravids (vassals of the Abbasids, 1040–1147) in Cordoba in 1137 (see Balbale, CHAPTER 14). The Sicilian *opus sectile* pavements, in their ingenious fusions of Italian and Islamic ornament, embody a distinct regional marblework tradition. A further peculiarity of Sicilian and south Italian pavements, as noted by Ruggero Longo (2011b), concerns the use of bright white artificial limestone termed *stracotto*, in order to intensify chromatic contrasts among the various materials and possibly also in aesthetic emulation of Islamic pearl or ivory inlay or ceramic mosaic (*zellij/azulejos*) adorning wall dadoes and floors in northern Africa and Spain. That the use of *stracotto* is attested slightly earlier in Campania, in the pavement of Salerno Cathedral (1121–1136), implies artistic and technical interaction between southern Italy and Sicily. It might be tempting to relate such Italianate–Islamicate marble amalgams to the presence of a workshop of Arab-Christian *marmorarii* (*rakhkhamin*), like those recently explored by Giuseppe Mandalà, who were active in Palermo between 1169 and 1202, although evidence for this is not yet forthcoming (Moscone and Mandalà 2009: 174–238, pls. 2–4). Yet the historian Amatus of Montecassino (III.52) reports that already between 1066 and 1071, "Saracen" artisans from Alexandria and Greek craftsmen from Constantinople were called in by Abbot Desiderius to fashion the pavements of the important abbey of Montecassino in Campania.

In addition to their polychromatic interior ornament, both churches and palaces were crowned by ogee- or palmette-shaped merlons (Bellafiore 1990: 136–138, figs. 143–144; Tomaselli 1994: figs. 64–65, 68, 72–77) and Arabic epigraphy taking the form of banded (*tiraz*) friezes. The latter served not only as a means of conveying Christian and royal messages but also as aesthetic devices for compositional design, as they did in contemporary Islamic architecture (Bellafiore 1990: 91). This Islamic conception of epigraphic friezes was extended to the Greek and Latin epigraphic friezes crowning respectively the Martorana and San Cataldo church façades, thereby communicating Christian messages by means of Islamic aesthetics (Bellafiore 1990: figs. 117, 119, 140, 144; Tomaselli 1994: figs. 20, 34–35, 45–47, 64, 72–77).

The Cappella Palatina Ceiling and other Painted Ceilings

The Cappella Palatina within the Norman palace in Palermo can be regarded as one of the most extraordinary artistic achievements of Norman Sicily, owing to its opulent decoration, which juxtaposes elements from divergent, Latin, Greek, and

Arab artistic traditions, which, according to William Tronzo's (1997) seminal study of the monument, mirrors the multicultural constitution of the Rogerian kingdom. Like other medieval palatine chapels, the Cappella Palatina served, since its foundation by King Roger II between 1132 and 1140, as a venue for liturgical and royal ceremonial; the latter witnessed by the grandiose throne-platform at its west end beneath the mosaic of Christ enthroned between the apostles Peter and Paul (Tronzo 1997: 68–77, 94–133). Although the Cappella Palatina has undergone several constructional, functional, and restorational phases, its overall makeup is agreed to reflect the twelfth-century Norman monarchy (Brenk 2010; Dittelbach 2011). The basic form of the church is that of a triple-aisled basilica with a large domed chamber immediately preceding the apse. The elements of this domed basilica building include Byzantinizing mosaics in the domed sanctuary preceding the apse; Latinate mosaics with biblical cycles of the basilica; Italianate *opus sectile* dadoes and pavements (incorporating Islamicate ornament); as well as three Islamic-style wooden ceilings sheltering respectively the nave (Figure 15.5) and the two aisles of the basilica.

While the Cappella Palatina ceilings are usually referred to as Islamic, the term "Islamicate" may more accurately denote their location inside a Christian chapel and the occasional Christian scenes and crosses present in them. The grand *muqarnas* ceiling (18.25 × 5 m; 10.5–13 m high) suspended like a huge tent over the nave, and with two parallel rows of coffering in the form of eight-pointed stars (echoing floor patterns), contains the bulk of painted figural imagery (Figure 15.5). The ceiling belongs to the *muqarnas* tradition of the Maghrib, with the closest analogies provided by the *muqarnas* ceilings and domes of the Almoravid al-Qarawiyyin Mosque, Fez (1132–1143) and the Almohad Tinmal Mosque (1153–1154), which are, however, made of stucco rather than wood unlike the Cappella Palatina ceiling (Agnello 2010; Knipp 2011b). The pitched lower ceilings spanning the two aisles of the Cappella Palatina follow a simpler layout of long channeled coffers with rounded terminations (Kapitaikin 2003–2004).

The three ceilings are painted in their entirety in tempera colors on a gesso primer – marine blue, crimson red, brown, and golden hues predominating. Repaintings and restorations, carried out from the thirteenth century until the problematic 2005–2008 restoration by the Würth Trust, affected some 20–30 percent of the original ensemble. The far-ranging themes include banquet scenes of the ruler in the entourage of bodyguards, boon companions (Arabic sing. *nadim*), musicians, and dancers; battle and hunting; mythological subjects; architectural and genre scenes; real and fantastic animals; and Islamicate nonfigural ornaments accompanied by Arabic inscriptions invoking blessings (Johns 2010; Kapitaikin 2011).

Since Ugo Monneret de Villard's (1950) pioneering monograph on the ceilings, recent studies by Kapitaikin (2003–2004; 2011), Grube and Johns (2005), and Johns (2010) advanced considerably the mapping and interpretation of their unique ensemble. Numbering collectively 3343 individual framed paintings, the three ceilings may well be the largest painted cycle to survive from the medieval Mediterranean, whether Islamic or Christian. Even so, a comprehensive

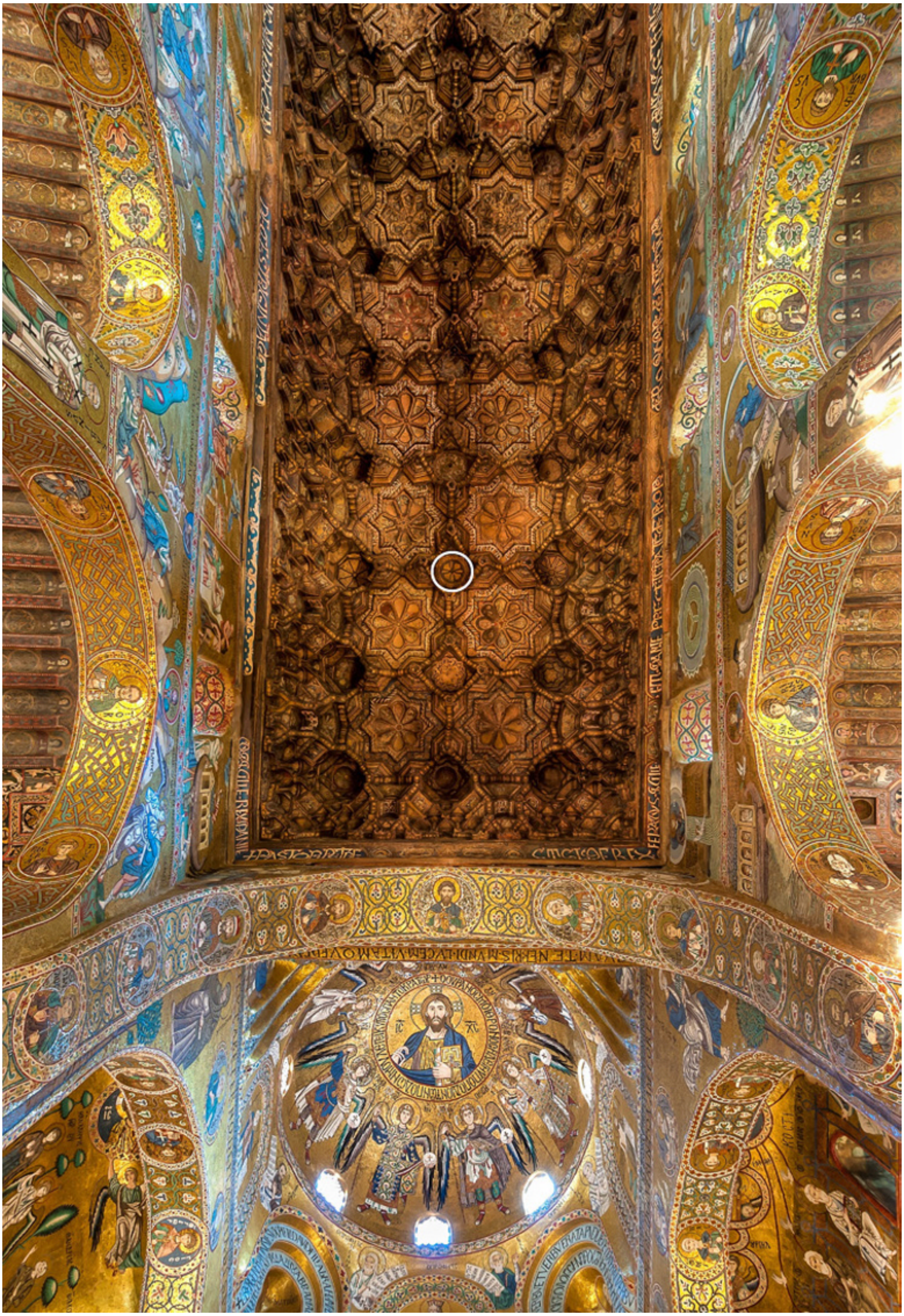

FIGURE 15.5 Cappella Palatina, Palermo, nave *muqarnas* ceiling with a marked Christian cross inside rhombus, 1140s. Source: Ruggero Poggianella, Fotopoggia, 2011, Reproduced with permission.

monographic publication of the Cappella Palatina ceilings and paintings has not been attempted so far (see, however, Kapitaikin 2011). In the absence of contemporary documents to elucidate the ceilings' commission, creation, and meaning, the provenance of their constructors and painters may be the most contentious issue; Sicily itself (Grube and Johns 2005: 16–19, 23–25), Fatimid Egypt and/or North Africa, and northern Syria and/or northern Iraq have been the main regions suggested as their origins in modern scholarship. The issue at stake concerns not just the attribution of the Cappella Palatina ceilings per se but the question of whether they are representative of an indigenous Sicilian painting tradition dating back to the period of Muslim rule in Sicily or, alternatively, an import of eclectic foreign traditions and/or artisans by the Normans for the purpose of this and similar royal projects. In fact, church ceilings painted in Islamicate style survive also at Cefalù Cathedral (Aurigemma 2004) and existed also previously in the Palermo and Messina cathedrals, and the Magione church in Palermo, except that all these latter Sicilian ceilings were not *muqarnas* vaults but structurally closer to the wooden *artesonado* ceilings of al-Andalus and the Maghrib, in which Islamic stellate patterns or coffers are inserted into trabeate roofs. Such structural variance underscores the need to draw a distinction between the makers and painters of the Cappella Palatina and other Sicilian ceilings; the two did not necessarily belong to one and same workshop, or even the same artistic tradition, for that matter. What is clear is that the painted Sicilian ceilings along with "Siculo-Arabic" painted ivories (discussed below) highlight "the overriding painting aesthetic in the Norman visual arts" (Hoffman 2011: 112).

Evidence for the existence of such intricate painted ceilings in the Islamic monuments of pre-Norman Sicily is still lacking, whereas both Fatimid and/or Maghribi (Ettinghausen 1942; Johns 1993: 153–159), and Syrian–Jaziran connections (Knipp 2006; Monneret de Villard 1950: 47–48, 53–56) are made more likely by extensive diplomatic, mercantile, cultural, and other links that existed between Norman Sicily, Fatimid Egypt, North Africa, and the Crusader Levant – especially the Norman principality of Antioch. Richard Ettinghausen's (1942) "Fatimid thesis" regarding the origin of the ceiling painters was recently taken up by this author (Kapitaikin 2011) and supported with reference to iconographic and stylistic affinities between the Palatina paintings and Fatimid and Ayyubid artworks. These include the shared use of Fatimid conventions in animal representations and similarities in ornament – specifically the coffers with stellate patterns, which recall comparable designs in Cairene monuments built or redecorated for the caliph al-Hafiz (r. 1130–1149), with whom Roger II exchanged diplomatic correspondence (Johns 2002: 259–265; Kapitaikin 2003–2004: 129, 142, figs. 8–16; Kapitaikin 2011: 147–170; 179–185, figs. 4.46–4.73).

The prevalent notion of older studies that the disposition of the paintings in the ceilings lacks any consistency or order (Gabrieli and Scerrato 1979: 374–376; Monneret de Villard 1950: 31, 34–35, 40) was challenged in recent studies by Ernst Grube and Jeremy Johns (2005: 22–23; Johns 2010), David Knipp (2006), and Kapitaikin (2011); although as Oleg Grabar remarks, a digital reimagining of the ceilings may be the optimal method for recovering meaningful relations between the myriad paintings, if not a comprehensive "program" within. These later scholars focused on the rarer, alleged "Christian scenes," such as a mounted knight slaying a dragon (the military Saint Theodore?) or a man killing a lion (Samson or David?) (Brenk 2010: vol. 2 (Atlante 2), figs. 627, 850, 913, 1055; 686, 806; Knipp 2006: 291–297, figs. 11–12, 17), but their religious signification remains nonetheless equivocal and disputed, raising issues of commission, execution, spectatorship, and meaning that bear upon the larger issue of how an Islamic "princely cycle," that makes up 95 percent of the ceilings, could be enlisted and adapted for glorifying a Christian monarch in his palatine chapel. Whereas David Knipp (2006) regards such scenes as "ambiguously Christian," Johns (2002: 212–234, 243–256; 2010: 401–403; 2011) argues that the Muslim painters of the ceilings utilized Christian iconography only for its form, not content, suggesting that certain divergences in the iconography of the ceilings reflect the agency of crypto-Muslim eunuchs at the Norman court.

Conversely, Kapitaikin argues that the Christian content of many such scenes was maintained as such, citing in view of their programmatic placement and consistent spatial association with kingly imagery (2011: 500–506, 510–517, 525–526). Such programmatic meaning surely informed the situation of the pair of paintings identified as representing a palace and church (featuring crosses and liturgical utensils) at the exact latitudinal centre of the nave ceiling, on its northern side. This focal disposition created a reflexive relation between the painted and actual buildings, and may have referred to the royal palace and the Cappella Palatina itself (Brenk 2010: vol. 2 (Atlante 2), figs. 583, 590–591; Kapitaikin 2011: 432–447, 502–504, pls. I, VIII, XVIII, figs. 13.1, 13.3, 13.16–17). In addition, the "Islamic" ceilings of the Palatina feature occasional crosses (Figure 15.5). Strangely neglected by previous scholarship, their clear Christian signification is confirmed by comparisons drawn with analogous crosses in other Sicilian artworks, as well as their formal affinity to Coptic cross-types in Fatimid and Ayyubid period artworks from Egypt (Kapitaikin 2011: 82–84, 487–495, 513–516, 671–679, pl. XX, figs. 14.30–14.45). Whether painted at the behest of their commissioners or executioners, these crosses might support the Fatimid attribution of the ceilings, nuancing the cultural and religious complexities of their design and creation.

"Siculo-Arabic" Painted Ivories and the Popularization of Courtly Painting

In addition to Fatimid affinities, the painted ceilings in the Cappella Palatina share noticeable parallels with a corpus of what are generally known as "Siculo-Arabic" painted ivories. The ivories –over 300 are recorded (Armando 2012: 196

and census) – are characterized by a common subject-matter, which includes Islamic princely pastimes, animals and birds, ornamental roundels, and Arabic inscriptions of blessings, in addition to a few subjects usually interpreted as "Christian." These ivory containers, most commonly of rectangular or cylindrical shapes with flat or truncated-pyramidal lids, were painted in unstable water- or tempera-based pigments – red, green, and blue – with gold-leaf gilding on ivory surfaces that were often polished. The Sicilian or south Italian attribution and twelfth- or thirteenth-century date of the main group of ivories has been commonly, albeit not unanimously, accepted. However, the production of painted ivories in a differing style continued until at least the fourteenth century also in northern Italy and Christian and Islamic Spain, with some pieces presenting "Western" Gothic paintings while others feature ornament that can be related to the Almohad realm (Armando 2012: 18–19; Knipp 2011a: 9; Pinder-Wilson and Brooke 1973; Shalem 2007: 234–235). In this aspect, "Siculo-Arabic" painted ivories could be conceptualized also as part of a larger phenomenon of the "explosion" of ivory production and trade networks in the Christian and Islamic Mediterranean between the tenth and thirteenth centuries (Hoffman 2011; Knipp 2011a).

Rectangular and cylindrical ivory boxes were inventoried also in the treasury of the Fatimid caliphs (Armando 2012: 20, citing Maqrizi, I, 414), whereas motifs like animals in roundels were common to painted ivories and the carved ivory horns ("oliphants") attributed to southern Italy and Fatimid Egypt (Hoffman 2011). Further stylistic and thematic parallels also exist between the decoration of "Siculo-Arabic" ivories and other artistic media, notably thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Islamic enameled glass vessels produced in Syria and Egypt and widely exported in the Mediterranean and the Crusader Levant.

Many painted ivories were apparently made as jewelry containers or bridal caskets, a function hinted at by the amatory verses from *One Thousand and One Nights* inscribed on a few of them: "two lovers upon a single bed, embracing each other beneath the coverlets of love" (Pinder-Wilson and Brooke 1973: 186). But the corpus of "Siculo-Arabic" ivories also includes crosiers and "ecclesiastical combs" painted in identical style to the containers, whose Christian liturgical function cannot be doubted. Moreover, there is also evidence implying that at least some of the containers served from the start in liturgical use, while later on many of the ivories acquired a "second life" as receptacles for Christian holy relics (Armando 2012: 1, 60–62, 125–128, 204–205). In their appropriation of Islamic or Islamicate painting for Christian use, these liturgical ivories thus parallel the painted ceilings of the Cappella Palatina.

The rare "Christian scenes" usually feature conspicuously on the lids or fronts of the ivories, implying that they were put there for the benefit of the Christian commissioners or consumers of these objects (Cutler 2011: 29–34; Dodd 2011). As in the Cappella Palatina ceilings, so too in the ivories, the Christian significance of such scenes is often rendered problematic because of their anomalous iconography, such as the cruciferous halo that is sported by a harpy figure on an ivory box in the Victoria and Albert Museum, a feature that is normally the prerogative of Christ alone (Andaloro 2006: vol. 2, 299, no. IV.15; Dodd 2011: 155–157, figs. 5–6). This detail suggests that the painters were often Muslims not fully conversant with Christian imagery. Nevertheless, Arabic inscriptions and the coating of the inner surface of a few ivory containers with fragments of Arabic-inscribed documents (Troia Cathedral and Museo Sacro Vaticano) demonstrate the profoundly Arabicized milieu of their production (Armando 2012: 113–115, 162–167, 206).

That not even one of the many "Siculo-Arabic" ivories records a patron or production site, unlike Andalusian carved ivories, which were produced and inscribed for a courtly entourage, negates Knipp's view (2011a: 9–10) that these pieces emanated from the Norman court, an assertion for which there is little evidence. Conversely, Avinoam Shalem (2007) conceives the "Siculo-Arabic" ivories in terms of mass production intended chiefly for export, citing the mediocre quality of both painting and structure that in rectangular boxes commonly consists of thin sheets of ivory, often shoddily affixed by means of ivory pegs and metallic clasps and hinges. In this, he follows the seminal study of "Siculo-Arabic" painted ivories by Ralph Pinder-Wilson and Christopher Brooke (1973; also Armando 2012: 43–51 and illustrations of groups I–VII), who classified them into seven stylistic-chronological groups assigned to different production centers. This classification, however, was challenged in the recent study by Silvia Armando (2012: 50–51, 69, 136–156, 196–207), which focused on ivories from Italian collections, viewing their technical and stylistic differences not as indications of chronological or regional varieties but rather as reflecting a range of products and qualities varying in accordance with the demands and means of the consumers of the painted ivories, which she suggests originate in a single production center in Palermo. Thus, the larger rectangular boxes were made of thin ivory sheets attached to a wooden carcass, whereas the smaller ones were assembled of thicker ivory pieces without a wooden frame; such qualitative difference suggesting variable audiences, with the finer caskets involving more ivory material; examples include "The Box of Privileges" in the treasury of the Cappella Palatina, perhaps made for the aristocracy or the commercial elite (Armando 2012: 64–66, 81–85, 96–97, 206; Cutler 2011: 18–20, 34, fig. 1). In view of the great variety of their technique and decoration, it is likely that several Sicilian workshops were engaged in the production of painted ivories.

Anthony Cutler (2011: 24) describes the ivories as having been painted serially, whereby the artisan distributes conventionalized designs "among a succession of objects moving across his work bench" in a procedure slightly reminiscent of handmade Russian matryoshka dolls or lacquer boxes. Shared or interrelated stylistic nuances such as the conventional round hair-lock on the forehead of drinkers with cup on the lid of an ivory box in the Hague and in a Cappella Palatina painting (Cutler 2011: fig. 3; cf. Brenk 2010: vol. 2, Atlante 2, fig. 595) suggest an interdependency of craft, perhaps even the sharing of designers, between painted ceilings and painted ivories. Stylistic affinities of the painted ivories to Fatimid luster ceramics have also been noted, yet the figures in the ivories tend to be executed in sketchier, rapid lines that suggest mass copying and reproduction of motifs from other media (Hoffman 2011: 108, 112). Extensive projects like painted ecclesiastical ceilings might have generated surpluses of artisans and demand for replicas of such costly paintings in the cheaper but attractive medium of ivory-veneered boxes, that could be conceived as a *colloquialization* of courtly painting sponsored by the Sicilian monarchy and destined for Christians and Muslims alike.

Conclusion

Throughout the 200 years of Islamic rule and into the period of Norman rule, Arabic- and Greek-speaking Christian communities continued their uninterrupted existence at the eastern tip of Sicily, in Val Demone (Metcalfe 2003: 11–21; 2009: 32–35). A few extant twelfth-century documents, including the Arabic-Christian prayer inscribed on the dome of the Martorana church in Palermo, the trilingual Latin–Greek–Arabic psalter in the British Library (Harley 5786, 1130–1153), and an inventory of Latin liturgical works in Arabic recently discovered in the Cappella Palatina treasury attest to the performance of the Christian liturgy in the Arabic language, likely in the milieu of the royal court (Nef 2008: 267–268, note 55; 273–277). That phenomenon might offer another promising framework of inquiry to contextualize the multivisuality and multilingualism of medieval Sicily. It is only natural to assume that such an Arabic-Christian liturgy catered to converts, Arabicized Christians or Sicilian "Mozarabs," whose precise identity is being debated (Metcalfe 2003: 16, 59; Metcalfe 2009: 225–227; Nef 2008; Mandalà 2014). Other likely audiences for that mixed liturgy were the "Palace Saracens" of the royal court – often eunuchs who had ostensibly converted to Christianity but who continued practicing Islam clandestinely (Johns 2002: 212–234, 243–256; Johns 2011) and whose involvement in architectural projects and royal workshops is recorded (Johns 2011: 566). Muslims, Christians, Jews, converts, and those whose identities lay somewhere in between were likely to have a share in the commission, design, creation, and use of Sicilian monuments and objects. Whether instigated and sponsored by the royal court or driven and nurtured by deeper sociocultural undercurrents, as in the Crusader Levant or Islamic Spain, such artworks are expressions of a unique "Siculo-Arabic" cultural and visual identity, which faded away with the passing of the Norman Christian monarchy that fostered or staged it but nonetheless left an enduring imprint on Sicily's visual and material culture.

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Note

1 Important re-examinations of Siculo-Arabic epigraphy include Grassi 2004 and Johns 2006.

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16

Transculturation in the Eastern Mediterranean[1]

Eva R. Hoffman and Scott Redford

Battered by wind, waves, and rocks, a small ship sank in a small bay off southwestern Anatolia one day in the early eleventh century. The ship in question is known in the scholarly literature as the Serçe Limanı shipwreck. It was a merchantman some 15 × 5 m in size. When the ship sank, sometime near the year 1025, it was probably on the return voyage to a port in Byzantine territory (likely Constantinople) after calls in Syria and Egypt, and carried a cargo, among other things, of three tons of raw glass and cullet from a glass factory somewhere on the Levantine coast (Bass *et al.* 2004).

The passengers and crew had with them some Islamic items: Egyptian or Syrian jewelry and coins, glazed ceramics, a wooden chess set, and metal objects, including a bucket with an Arabic inscription of Kufic style. There were also items of Byzantine origin on board, among them coins, seals, weapons, and fishing weights. The coins found at the shipwreck were Fatimid and Byzantine, and the glass, glazed ceramics, and several metal objects came from Fatimid Syria.

In many ways, the Serçe Limanı shipwreck constitutes a good starting point for an examination of movements of people and products between Islamic and Christian cultural spheres. The ship had cramped passenger compartments in both bow and stern. Both contained artifacts that could be directly associated with merchants and their cargo. Excavators recovered, as a minor part of the cargo, a stash of 44 glazed Syrian or Egyptian bowls and some 80 pieces of intact glassware. It is likely that these constituted a personal investment on the part of the merchant passengers, and were meant for resale in Byzantine territory. This kind of specific information, and the very ordinariness of the Serçe Limanı ship, provide invaluable context for the to and fro of commerce in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. Its industrial cargo, relating to the glass industry, may have been

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only one of several it carried during the shipping season, so a different cargo may have been peddled in Cyprus, Egypt, or the Levant on the voyage out.

Another point can be made based on the mixed nature of the cargo. Certainly 44 glazed ceramic bowls and 80 pieces of glassware do not constitute a large haul, but more than a century before the rise of glazed earthenware production, mainly of bowls, that occurred in the eastern Mediterranean beginning in the mid- to late twelfth century, they provide an instance of the constant flow of artifacts around the Mediterranean, and specifically between areas under Christian and Islamic dominion. The wreck also furnishes a point of entry for these artifacts – to be hawked on streets and decks, displayed in shops and used at banquets: certainly exotica, but not of a rarefied, seldom encountered kind.

The Syrian glass cullet that constituted the main cargo of the Serçe Limanı shipwreck can serve metaphorically here: rather than viewing societies as tightly sealed, Tupperware-like vessels, we should think of the recycling, recasting, reframing, and reinterpretation of cultural products from one "civilization" to another. Without the Serçe Limanı shipwreck, we would never know that some, perhaps many, Byzantine glass vessels were made from Syrian glass.

The Serçe Limanı shipwreck, thus, provides evidence both dramatic and mundane of the extent to which Islamic art and material culture were enmeshed within the medieval Mediterranean sphere. Beyond exemplifying exchange of forms and motifs, the evidence of Byzantine glassware made from Syrian glass attests to entanglements that extend to the very fabric of the materials. The interconnectedness continued through design, taste, and consumption, as these glass objects journeyed between Islamic and Byzantine ports and circulated in their markets. This example highlights the porosity of Islamic–Byzantine boundaries in the negotiation of visual and cultural identities in the Mediterranean and calls for a dynamic approach of study.

A more integrated view of the Mediterranean has been provided by a number of impressive scholarly publications from the middle of the twentieth century onwards (Abulafia 2011; Braudel 1949; Goitein 1967–1993; Horden and Purcell 2000). Indeed, while there is no singular vision of the Mediterranean, the rubric "Mediterranean Studies," serves, above all, as a heuristic device for challenging the disciplinary boundaries of "nation" and "religion" and offering an opportunity to engage in broader, more fluid perspectives on how we think about history (summarized in Rosser-Owen 2012; Kinoshita 2009).

This chapter aims both to expand and to question traditional fixed categorizations of works of art and the medieval cultures around the central and eastern Mediterranean that produced them. Like the Serçe Limanı glassware, many works of art crossed political and religious boundaries between societies in which varieties of Christianity or Islam were dominant. Rather than attributing these works to single dynastic and religious identities, we turn to the model of transculturation, the ability of objects to share, or accrue, meanings across the cultural and confessional divide. Yet, this does not simply suggest a unidirectional transmission from one specific source culture to a second destination culture but rather a more expansive process that allows for a multiplicity of intersections with an emphasis on networks of exchange and interactivity that is multidirectional, to the extent that it is often difficult or impossible to identify individual sources of origin. Like many other terms that have been proposed to convey the concept of interaction (e.g., hybridity and syncretism), the term "transculturation" must always be defined within the specific contexts in which it is used. Indeed, the term comes from Latin American Studies in the context of the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, and since then it has appeared most frequently in the scholarship pertaining to colonialism and postcolonialism (Codell 2012, with much relevant literature: 4–5). The phenomenon of transculturation, however, is by no means exclusively modern but rather has existed throughout history and is manifest in a wide variety of medieval Islamic material culture (e.g., Flood 2009). It is a defining feature of medieval Mediterranean visual and cultural identity, but the study undertaken here does not simply graft the modern context of the negotiations of power relations onto the medieval Mediterranean retrospectively. We argue that peculiar historical, geographical, and cultural circumstances caused a surge in many different kinds of exchange within and across the realms of the court and commerce in the Mediterranean between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

Lest the Serçe Limanı shipwreck and the "Mediterranean" label lead the reader to think that it was watery ways that "dissolved" or "washed away" cultural and artistic difference, we would like to point out a rise in land-based commerce and communication as well. During the mid- to late twelfth century, and increasingly during the thirteenth, states in Anatolia, northern Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine constructed bridges, caravanserais, and even trading cities in order better to link regions overland with one another, and with ports where maritime and terrestrial-based networks intersected. We, therefore, feel justified in including this material within the Mediterranean visual and cultural sphere. Because the architecture of caravan routes grew so spectacularly in the later part of our chronological period, we will examine this phenomenon later in the chapter.

The process of transculturation in the particular context of art and culture of the Mediterranean during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries offers important insights into the nature of localization and identity. When available, it has been possible to use archaeologically derived material to try and localize a few of the many streams flowing into the sea, in the belief that context can give insight into the mechanics or means of cultural connectivity, and through them insights into the cultural weight objects acquire in moving from one cultural context to another (e.g., Redford 2004, 2012). In many cases, however, archaeological evidence is unavailable. The localization of a large group of animal metalwork sculptures, textiles, and ivories has routinely been shifted back and forth, for example, between centers in the Maghrib, Africa, Egypt, Sicily, Venice, and al-Andalus, and between Islamic, Norman, and Byzantine realms (Contadini 2010; Hoffman 2001).

One group of "oliphants," ivory horns carved from elephant tusks, is emblematic of the complexities of localization and may serve as an instructive example (Figure 16.1) (Hoffman 2011). These are mass-produced Roundel Design oliphants, carved with themes of hunt and animals enclosed in roundels, a widespread motif throughout Islamic, Byzantine, and Italian centers in the Mediterranean from late antiquity through medieval times. With no intrinsic available evidence indicating where these oliphants were made, scholars have linked them to the Fatimid style and suggested various Italian sites of production along the Mediterranean coast, from southern Italy and Sicily to Venice (Ebitz 1986; Kühnel 1971: 6–23; Shalem 2004, 63–64).

Indeed, the various sites of production proposed by scholars may lead us to an expanded notion of localization as part of the process of transculturation. Detailed examination of the works demonstrates that close ties of a number of these works to Fatimid Egypt were established not through direct links to Fatimid ivories but rather through works in the media of textiles and ceramics, made in Fatimid Egypt and other Islamic Mediterranean locations, which were available, actively traded, and imitated in Italian centers (Ebitz 1986: 310; Hoffman 2011: 104–105; Shalem 2004: 71–72, fig. 49). Allowing for individual differences, the decoration of these mass-produced Roundel Design oliphants represents nothing less than translations of designs from textiles and ceramics into ivory. Furthermore, another

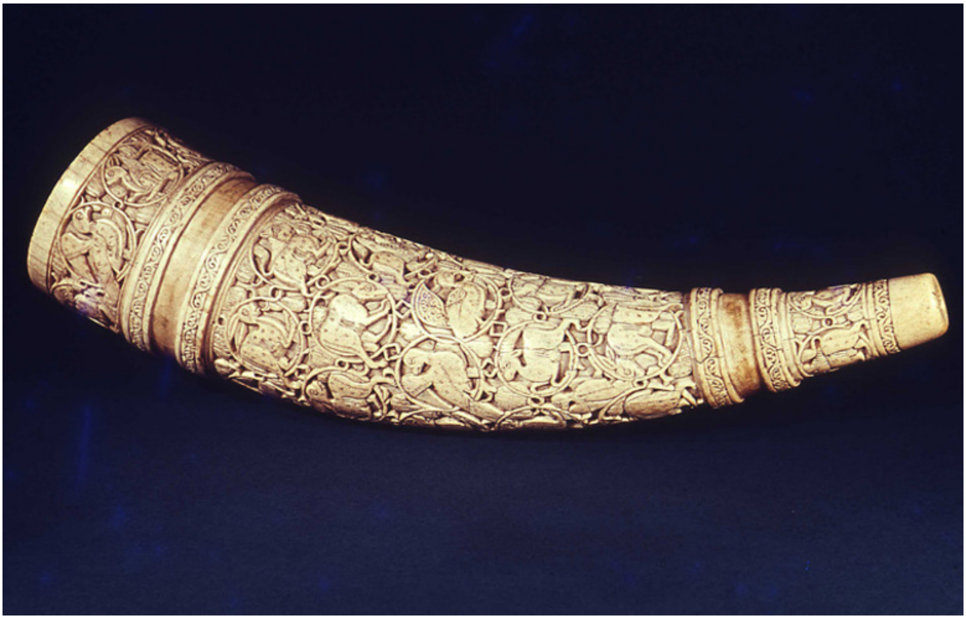


FIGURE 16.1 Oliphant, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, K3106. Source: Jürgen Liepe, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Reproduced with permission.

coordinate of exchange and identity for the oliphants is the Crusader market and the destination of these works beyond the Mediterranean into northern European church treasuries (Ebitz 1984; Shalem 2004: 107). In the Crusader context, the appearance of an Islamic/Fatimid style was a recognizable signifier for the memory and presence of the Holy Land. More than any singular source of influence or site of localization, therefore, the Roundel Design oliphants may best be localized at the nexus of Italian and Fatimid/Islamic cultural and commercial space along the network of Crusader circulation and exchange; a network that connected the holy space of Jerusalem and the church treasuries in northern Europe, and intersected commercial and holy spaces.

Cultural mobility activated transculturation in reconceptualizing localization from individual sites and circumstances of production to arenas in which works were circulated and viewed. A discourse of portability fostered a shared visual vocabulary, linking these arenas across political and religious boundaries, allowing for identities and meanings that are both multiple and individual. Portability not only facilitated the physical movement of objects from one site to another but also allowed objects to extend well beyond themselves, both geographically and semantically. Framed through these more dynamic possibilities, localization occurs over much longer trajectories, both spatially and temporally. It may be defined through zones of contact, situated at the intersection of cultural space located along the networks of their circulation (Hoffman 2001).

Spatial and Temporal Connections and Continuities

Between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, well-traveled routes formed in antiquity and late antiquity were reactivated. Courts around the Mediterranean basin, in Constantinople, Cairo, Cordoba, and Palermo flourished and competed. In the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, the coming of the Crusades and the rise of the Italian merchant republics tightened ties (Folda 1995, 2005). The energetic competition between these powers sometimes took the form of military conflict, but commerce and diplomacy thrived as well. The constant traffic of people and goods, at court level through gifts and at merchant-class level through trade, proved an effective recipe for sustaining relations. Ports and courts around the Mediterranean housed populations representing the ethnic and religious peoples of other Mediterranean centers. When traveling anywhere within the Mediterranean, as Goitein noted, “one was, so to speak, within one’s own precincts” (Goitein 1967–1993: vol. 1, 42).

Maritime networks, while based in the northern, Christian reaches of the Mediterranean, of course did not neglect its southern shores – the Byzantines had long traded with their Muslim neighbors, and the ports of Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean were destinations for western Christian ships even before the First Crusade resulted in the establishment of Frankish states there.[2] Egypt and the ports of Syria and Palestine were also outlets for the eastern trade in spices and other exotic luxuries, as well as locally produced manufactured goods: as we have seen – metalwork, glass, glazed ceramics, and cloth of many varieties. But the rise of these maritime networks, at first supplemented and then began to replace Byzantine ones, increasing the availability of choice manufactured goods imported to northern and western Europe from Islamic lands, be they in the Iberian peninsula, North Africa, Egypt, or Syria. In addition to the trade with Egypt and the Levant, there was constant interchange here as well, especially between Andalusia, Italy, and Tunisia. Today, the most obvious survival of this interchange lies in the *bacini*, tin-glazed Tunisian, Sicilian, and Andalusi ceramics that decorate the façades of Italian churches (Berti and Tongiorgi 1981; Mathews 2012).

Hand in hand with the expansive spatial realm, the Mediterranean perspective points to the consideration of connectivities over time. Connections with the past ranged from the concrete to the imaginary. During this period rising prosperity and increased building activity accelerated the use of a feature found in all medieval Mediterranean societies: the reuse and repurposing of Pharaonic, Roman, Hellenistic, and other civilizations' architectural and other remains. And yet the sustained encounter with the artistic products of past civilizations cannot be attributed solely to architectural expediency – societies from Sicily to Mesopotamia actively reinterpreted and/or repurposed sculpture, coins, and other works of art, using them for talismans, divination, and astrological reasons and to link themselves creatively to early Islamic, Roman, and more chronologically remote civilizations. From the imitation of Hellenistic and Roman coins by Artuqid dynasts in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in northern Mesopotamia to the revival of the *augustalis* Roman gold coin by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (r. 1220–1250), from the reuse and imitation of Roman architectural sculpture by the sultans Nur al-Din Zangi (d. 1174) in Syria and ʿAlaʾ al-Din Kayqubad (r. 1219–1237) in Anatolia to the Venetian rebuilding of the Cathedral of San Marco beginning in the thirteenth and extending into the fourteenth century with real and imitation architectural elements from Constantinople, the past, always prominent in these ancient lands, engaged with the present in new ways.

Connectivity with the past was also preserved in the intellectual sphere. Beginning as early as the mid-eighth century and continuing into the ninth and tenth centuries a major intellectual movement took place – the translation into Arabic of a full range of scientific and learned works (Gutas 1998). These translations from disparate sources – Persian and Sanskrit as well as Greek – lent authority to and provided the foundation for the pursuit of original studies in Arabic of science, medicine, and philosophy between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. In some cases, these works were illustrated, both in the context of the ancient works and in the medieval context of Arabic translations and original Arabic works (Hoffman 2000).

Palatial Culture

The Courtly Sphere

While the period covered by this chapter includes the Fatimid and Byzantine empires, it is also notable for a proliferation of smaller courts, Christian and Muslim. Although Christian courts in the Mediterranean looked to the two Romes for legitimacy, it was the New Rome (Constantinople) that had more power and prestige, due in part to its artistic heritage. In the Islamic world, after the fall of the Shiʿi Fatimid dynasty in 1171, all of the Islamic courts of Syria, Anatolia, and the rest of southwest Asia were Sunni, and all inherited both the structure and the aspirations of the Sunni Great Seljuq sultanate.

Fatimid and Byzantine palaces were the exempla of grandeur and luxury. Diplomatic embassies traveled between the Byzantine, Fatimid, and other Islamic courts. In the contemporary accounts of the receptions given during these visits, there are striking similarities between descriptions of the Fatimid and Byzantine palaces and royal ceremonies. These diplomatic receptions, furthermore, recalled similar ones which took place in Baghdad in 917 and in Umayyad al-Andalus in 948–949, which in turn echoed even earlier ones held at the Sasanian court for Byzantine and Arab envoys.

Royal practices involving the staging of the ruler's appearance on a throne and the decoration of throne rooms were also shared among these courts. Quite common was the use of raised thrones screened by curtains to dramatize the appearance of the ruler while at the same time controlling and restricting his visibility (Necipoğlu 1993). In addition to shared royal practices, specific accessories belonging to previous or rival rulers were especially prized. For example, a set of precious gold window grilles that would provide the ruler with privacy as he viewed ceremonies and processions from his throne was looted from the Abbasid palace of al-Qaʾim (1055–1056) in Baghdad and then used by the Fatimids in Cairo (Walker 2003). In his description of the furnishings of the Fatimid palace, the traveler Nasir-i Khusraw specifies Byzantine fabrics of brocade and *buqalamun* (multicolored cloth) for the carpets and pillows (Necipoğlu 1993: 11–12; Thackston 1986: 56–57). Here too the Fatimids were following in the footsteps of their Abbasid predecessors in addition to choosing the highest quality textiles for court furnishings. Apart from the obvious note of admiration, by using Byzantine textiles, the Fatimids were asserting their belonging to the very highest echelon of the "family of kings." All of this confirms the extent to which the creation of court fashion and style was relational.

Indeed the conscious emulation of these prestigious Byzantine and Fatimid courts led to striking results in Venice. The decline of Byzantine power was gradual, and even the fall of Constantinople to the Venetians and French in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade, in a way, contributed to the mythology and aura of Byzantine cultural production, as the city, its art, its relics, and even its buildings were parceled and distributed around the Mediterranean basin, especially to Venice and France but also to Frankish lands in the eastern Mediterranean. The rebuilding of the church of San Marco with real and imitation Byzantine spolia, beginning in the thirteenth century and the filling of its treasury with relics, gave Venice the "Roman" past it had previously not had and "apparently evoked for the Venetians the imaginary eastern Mediterranean culture that they would have identified with the Holy Land" (Dale 2010: 165). In addition, works of Islamic art once in Constantinople, many of them Fatimid, passed into Venetian hands. The use of architectural spoliation continued in the later thirteenth century with the Genoese, who collaborated with the Byzantine Empire of Nicaea, which recaptured Constantinople in 1261, and incorporated stone sculpture from the Venetian commandery at Constantinople into their Ducal Palace in Genoa (Nelson 2010: 76). The emperor of Trebizond Manuel I, ruler of another rival Byzantine state, built the Church of the Haghia Sophia there in the later thirteenth century using spoliated columns brought from Constantinople.

In Anatolia, the Seljuq sultan of Rum ʿAlaʾ al-Din Kayqubad (r. 1220–1237), not restricting the contest for *romanitas* to Christian powers, also staked his claim to legitimacy external to his caliphal titles and Seljuq lineage. Beginning in the early 1220s, he rebuilt the citadel and city walls of his capital of Konya. In doing so, he continued the Byzantine practice of inserting spoliated marble elements in fortification walls, but he combined them with quotations from the Persian national epic of the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), the Qurʾan, and hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) and newly made figural sculpture with heraldic and astrological meaning (Bombaci 1969; Redford 1993). To these he added royal inscriptions, including one from one of his commanders, who was a member of the Byzantine ruling house overthrown by the Crusaders. In this ambitious epigraphic and sculptural program, the Seljuq sultan simultaneously laid claim to the past of Rum (Anatolia), placed it in an Islamic framework, and linked both to an implicit claim to Byzantium (Redford 1993, 2010).

Architectural elements were also used as trophies to demonstrate the superiority of one ruler or religion over another. For instance, the Shadhbakhtiyya madrasa in Aleppo (1193), built by a former Indian slave amir of Sultan Nur al-Din Zangi at the time of the Crusades, prominently incorporates columns spoliated from a Frankish Crusader Romanesque building in its mihrab, one of several twelfth- and thirteenth-century Syrian mosques and madrasas to do so (Figure 16.2). However, the best known and most striking example of architectural spolia as trophy occurred at the end of the Crusades. A Gothic church portal taken from the captured Crusader capital of Acre was reused by the Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Muhammad (d. 1343) in his madrasa and tomb in Cairo (Behrens-Abouseif 2014: 415–421; Harding and Micklewright 1997).

In addition to a penchant for using spolia, there was also a more widespread shared vocabulary of palace architecture and ceremony that extended well beyond the Fatimid–Byzantine court exchange and included Norman Sicily and the

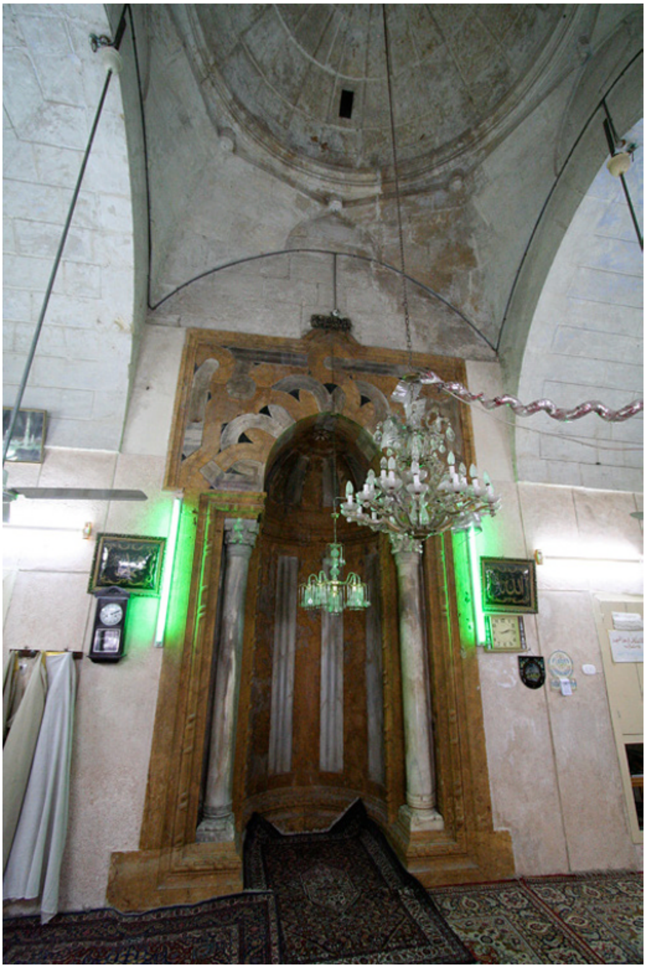


FIGURE 16.2 Shadhbakhtiyya madrasa in Aleppo, mihrab. Source: Suzan Yalman. Reproduced with permission.

Islamic dynasties of North Africa, as well as a range of dynasties from Constantinople to the Caucasus. The *muqarnas* domed pavilion, as a feature of shared palatial architecture, is particularly worthy of note. During the same period, this distinctive form enjoyed popularity in multiple widespread locations throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. As very few medieval palaces survive at all, let alone to the level of the vaulting, this architectural tradition is known to us largely from literary sources. Portable objects such as small ceramic tables in the form of pavilions give an idea of the form of now-lost palace pavilions. The *muqarnas* domed building, however, finds a correspondence in the surviving Islamic religious architecture of Syria and Mesopotamia, and the Islamic and Christian architecture of eastern and central Anatolia and the southern Caucasus, some of which prominently features a *muqarnas*-vaulted bay with or without an oculus at the top. In addition to the oculus-topped *muqarnas* bay found in the *gavit*s (narthexes) added to Armenian churches in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (Figure 16.3a), similar *muqarnas* vaulted bays open to the sky are found in late twelfth- and early fourteenth-century Islamic buildings in the city of Erzurum (Figure 16.3b). The *muqarnas* domed tomb or shrine was also a prominent feature of the skyline of Mosul, Baghdad, and Damascus (Figure 16.3c). In addition to evocations of this architectural trend in portable objects, it is possible that the elaborately built framed tent-pavilions and litters also contributed to the spread of this fashion (Redford 2012).

The connectivity of court cultures can be tied to the sheer numbers of small states that proliferated after the decline of centralized Abbasid power and especially following the fall of Constantinople in 1204, to gifting, the peripatetic nature of many monarchs (and their courts), and to the concomitant plethora of palaces (or, as noted above, of replicable palatial environments). The best surviving collection of contemporaneous palaces is that of the Normans of Sicily and their successor Frederick II Hohenstaufen (r. 1220–1250) in Sicily itself and southern Italy (see Kapitaikin, CHAPTER 15), and of the Seljuqs of Anatolia in southern and central Turkey, most of which date to the 1220s and 1230s. Here, and in other instances, we have evidence of similar practices of seasonal inhabitation of a cycle of palaces (with fighting generally taking place in the summertime). Remains of Seljuq palatial settings bear standardized imagery, figural and nonfigural, that overlap with the widespread visual language of power called heraldry in a medieval European context.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the horse-borne elites of Islamic and Christian courts were united by common cultural concerns and activities. Hunting on horseback with raptors and/or great cats was a craze common to elites from Central Asia through Burgundy. There was a lively trade in wild animals and birds used in hunting and the menageries of Christian and Islamic courts alike. In breaks between fighting, Crusader and Muslim foes avidly traded hunting animals and birds. Trade in live animals was accompanied by one in furs and skins of exotic animals and reptiles. Artistic echoes of this aspect of elite medieval culture can be found in subject matter (the use of lions and other big cats is too often attributed solely to "traditional" symbols of sovereignty) as well as material of works of art including ivory carvings.

Throughout the eastern Mediterranean, monarchs used hunting parks or royal forests. And the size of cities in most places was such that in addition to more remote game parks, monarchs had suburban garden palaces just outside cities and towns from Palermo to Aleppo, from Cairo to Constantinople. These gardens were not game parks themselves, but rather they served as centers for hunting and other ludic activities of the horse-borne ruling elites (Redford 2000). Such was the communality of these gardens that a chronicler of the Third Crusade accompanying the armies of German emperor Fredrick I Barbarossa casually notes his

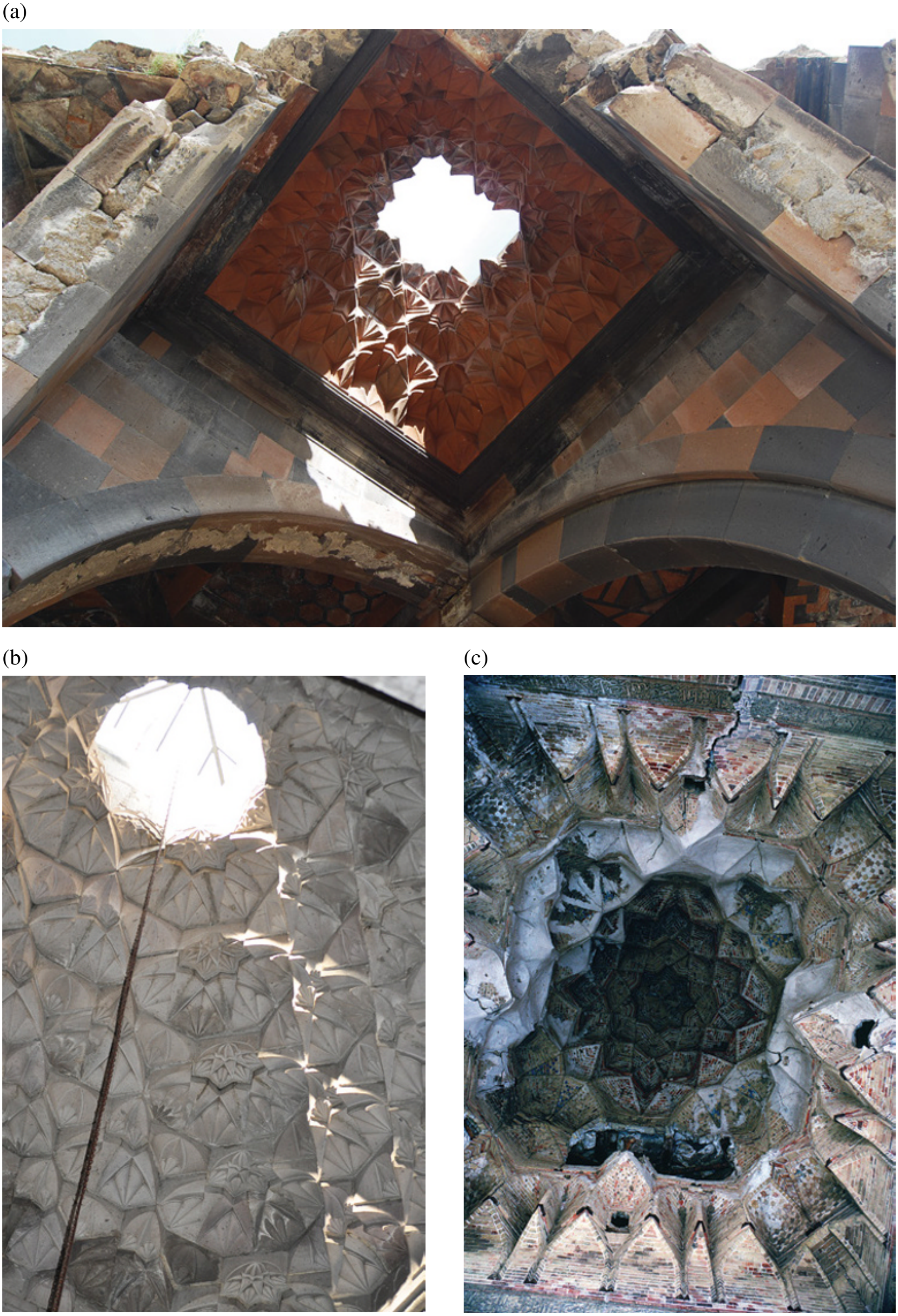


Figure 16.3 *Muqarnas oculi*. (a) *Gavit* of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Ani, late twelfth century. Source: Scott Redford. (b) Ulu Cami in Erzurum, late twelfth century. Source: Scott Redford. (c) Imam Yahya Mashhad, Mosul. Source: Yasser Tabbaa (1983). Courtesy of the MIT Libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive. Reproduced with permission.

taking up residence in the suburban garden of the Anatolian Seljuq sultan outside of his capital of Konya in 1190. The tiles from the Rum Seljuq palace of Kubadabad, built west of Konya in the mid-1220s, bear figural imagery that depicts animals both hunter and hunted. They are combined with other tiles depicting astrological and mythic creatures (Redford 2000: 69–76). Recent archaeological discoveries have pointed to the use of tiles with similar subject matter in Crusader eastern Mediterranean settings like Acre at this time (Blackman and Redford 2005: 104, 175–177; Stern 2010: fig. 7). It is likely that the subject matter of tile panels reflects contemporaneous mural painting, which has largely disappeared. The widespread use of tiles with figural decoration at this time may well be behind the appearance of tiles also with mythic and astrological imagery, in late twelfth- and thirteenth-century England.

Comparable imagery comprising real and imaginary animals, hunters, and palm trees survives in a twelfth-century mosaic program covering the vault and upper part of the walls of a reception room in the Norman Royal Palace in Palermo (Figure 16.4) (Hoffman 2001). While the symmetrical arrangement and pairing of the themes may suggest an adaptation from a textile design, the lushness of landscape and palm trees and the subject of the animal hunt may be related to the activities pursued in the pleasure parks in and outside of Palermo. The golden mosaic program of the Norman reception room recalls the following description by Nasir-i Khusraw of one of the square structures in the Fatimid Eastern Palace, which has not survived: "three sides all of gold, with hunting and sporting scenes depicted thereon and also an inscription in marvelous calligraphy" (Thackston 1986: 56–57). All of these motifs are familiar from the shared court imagery of royal power and glorification. The animals served as royal signs and guardians, and wielded power in the cosmic realm as well. The motif of paired animals flanking a tree descends from the ancient "Tree of Life/Tree of Paradise" motif, and in medieval times was associated with a royal or paradisiacal setting. In the local twelfth-century Norman context, these motifs may be found in Norman works that are generally associated with the Islamic sphere such as the Mantle of Roger II, the paintings on the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina, and the Siculo-Arabic painted ivories with landscape themes (Hoffman 2001, 2011, see Sokoly, CHAPTER 11, and Kapitaikin, CHAPTER 15). Naturally, each work must be considered on its own terms and within its own specific context as it is inflected with local and regional meanings as well.

In addition to its association with textile designs, the decoration of the Norman reception room offers striking comparisons to that of a number of portable works from both the eastern and western Mediterranean, including celebrated royal ivory boxes from al-Andalus (Hoffman 2001). As in the case of the small-scale ceramic objects evoking domed pavilions, portable works of textiles and ivories here served as conduits for exchange, facilitating dissemination throughout the entire range of Mediterranean courts and allowing us to view these royal works and themes through a broader lens.

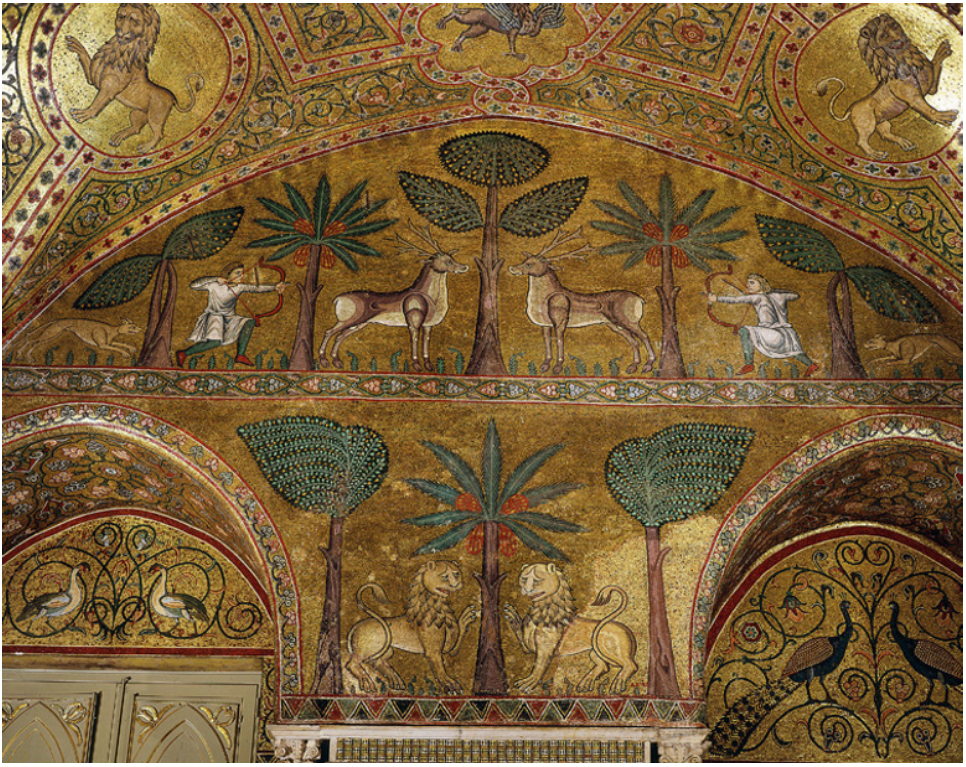


FIGURE 16.4 Reception room, 1150–1200, Norman Royal Palace, Palermo.
Source: Gianni Dagli Orti/The Art Archive at Art Resource, New York. Reproduced with permission.

As this suggests, there was a shared court taste for luxury. The quest for the prized singular object became a common trope among the courts and the courts vied with one another within the same definitions and criteria for luxury and the exotic. Foreign objects enjoyed a higher status than local ones and those from exotic "eastern" empires were held in highest esteem as paradigms of imperial luxury and grandeur.

Exchanges of gifts between royal courts contributed to the formulation and expansion of the visual discourse of court culture (Cutler 2001, 2008; Hilsdale 2012; Qaddumi 1996). As part of the visual language of diplomacy, gifts given from one ruler to another were inscribed with a shared vocabulary of power and prestige that incorporated the legacy of past rulers and past royal traditions. Such a gift is recorded in two accounts of saddles belonging to Alexander the Great which were given by the Byzantine emperor to the Egyptian Fatimid caliph, al-Mustansir (Qaddumi 1996: v.14, 98–99). The accounts of this gift clearly serve to demonstrate parity between the Fatimid and Byzantine rulers. As Alicia Walker has demonstrated, both polities shared in the legendary princely model of

Alexander (Walker 2012). With the transfer of Alexander's saddles from the Byzantine treasuries to the Fatimid realm, the Fatimids, like the Byzantines, could claim their place, too, in the line of succession from Alexander the Great.

A rare surviving work that maintained its status as a gift through its various negotiations of exchange at the very highest social level is the so-called Eleanor vase, a work of rock crystal now in the Louvre Museum in Paris and variously attributed and dated to the late Sasanian or early Islamic periods (seventh to ninth centuries) or to Fatimid Egypt in the tenth through twelfth centuries (Beech 1993; Hilsdale 2012). The routes of travel and the pathway of portability of this work are documented in the inscription on the twelfth-century mount for the vase that was added by the Abbot of Suger before 1147. He relates that it was given to William IX of Aquitaine by Mitadolus, who has been plausibly identified as ʿImad al-Dawla ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Hud, the last Islamic ruler of Saragossa (d. 1130) (Beech 1993: 5). Then it was given by William's granddaughter Eleanor of Aquitaine to her husband, Louis VII, as a bridal gift. It was then given by Louis VII to the Abbot Suger, who, in turn, presented it "to the saints," that is, he incorporated it in the treasury of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis. Through its journeys, the vase expressed a series of alliances and hierarchies and its status as a prized gift remained stable despite its multiple and changing role as it crossed political, social, and religious boundaries. Whether the vase was Sasanian or Fatimid in origin, Suger's inscription emphasized the significance of lineage for the work and for the relationships it documented: first establishing its eastern origins and its role in cementing the political bond, then the royal marital union, and then the bond between Suger and the royal sphere. Finally with Suger's gifting of the vase to the saints, he defined the sacred realm as the pinnacle of the hierarchical order.

This Mediterranean-wide royal taste for luxury, novelty, and wonder extended to automata, including those composed of "singing girls who bowed and stood up to greet the caliph as he sat on his throne" in the Fatimid Eastern Palace (Necipoğlu 1993: 11). Similar automata are described in accounts of contemporary Byzantine palaces. These works certainly belong to the theme of royal pleasure and entertainment, recalling a long series of dancers and entertainers including the "dancers" on pre-Islamic Sasanian silver gilt bottles and stucco figures at Khirbat al-Mafjar near Jericho, an early eighth-century palace built by the Umayyads, the first Islamic dynasty; the "dancers" painted on the walls of the ninth-century Abbasid palace at Samarra; the dancers carved on Fatimid ivories (Figure 16.5a); the dancers on the Byzantine enamel panels that are currently assembled as the "crown" of Constantine Monomachos (Hilsdale 2008: 611, fig. 9); and the dancers painted on the *muqarnas* ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo in the 1140s (Figure 16.5b) (Grube and Johns 2005; Johns forthcoming; Kapitaikin 2011: 465–467, 668, DC3, fig. 14.11a). Here too, it is a theme in the shared vocabulary of royal pastimes and prowess related to the daily activities of entertainers and the entourage of the court that appeared in the

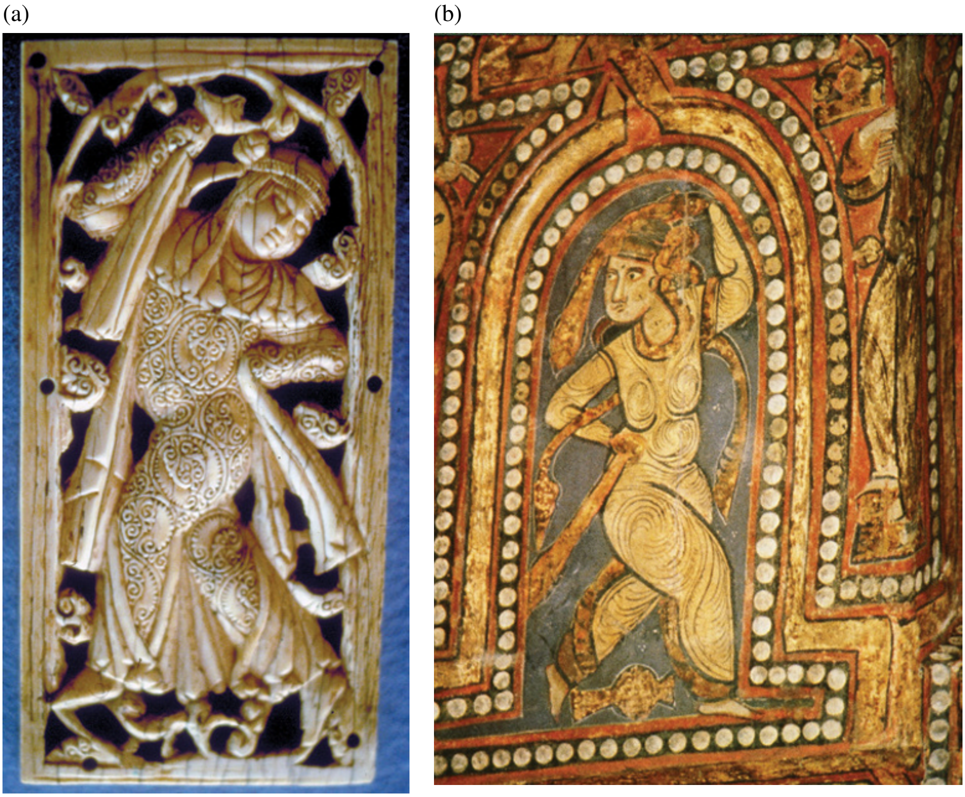
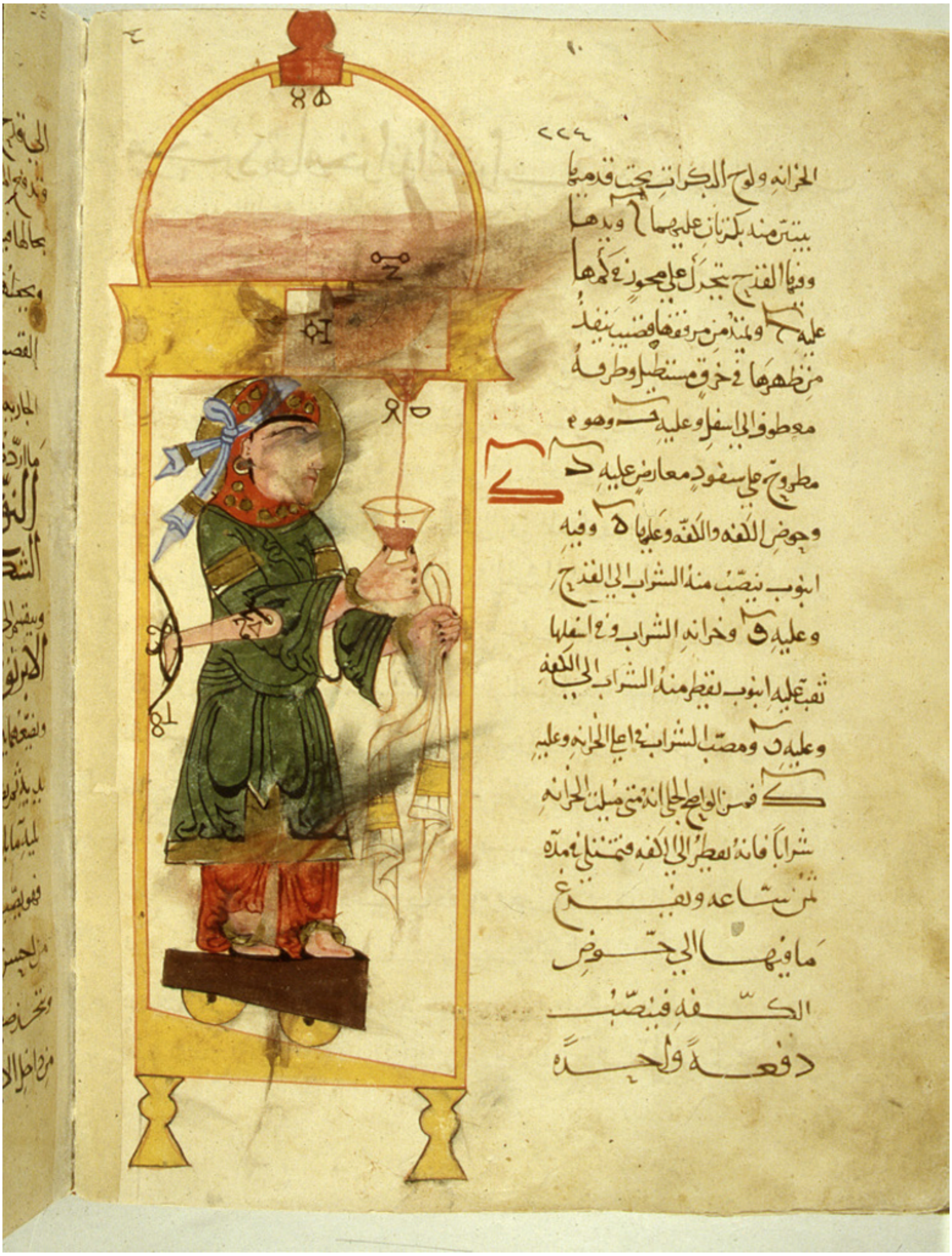


Figure 16.5 Two dancers. (a) Fatimid, ivory panel, tenth–twelfth century, Museo del Bargello, Florence. Source: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali – MiBAC. Reproduced with permission. (b) Norman Royal Palace, Palermo, painting on *muqarnas* ceiling, Cappella Palatina, *c.* 1140–*c.*1147. Source: Khalili Research Centre Archive, Slide no. KRC 15035. © 2010 University of Edinburgh and The Barakat Trust. Reproduced with permission.

palace decoration and was probably echoed on portable arts and treasures that were displayed on ceremonial occasions. Automata are also illustrated in al-Jazari's 1206 manuscript *The Book of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*, made for the Artuqid ruler of Diyarbakır in present-day southeastern Turkey. None of the automata described and illustrated in this manuscript dance, but young female and male automata play musical instruments, pour wine, and proffer napkins and mirrors (Figure 16.6).

Al-Jazari's manuscript depicts many other kinds of automata, including ones associated with a large elaborate water clock. Within a palace-like architectural setting, this clock marked the passage of time with automata banging on drums and playing trumpets, among other activities. The display of hydraulic clocks is another shared feature of medieval Mediterranean courts. From this time period,



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الخزانة ولوح الذكرات تحت قدميها
يبين منه بكرتان عليهما ح وبيدها
وفيها القدح يتحرك على محور في كمها
عليه ط وممتد من مرفقها قضيب ينفذ
من ظهرها في خرق مستطيل وطرفه
معطوف الى اسفل وعليه ح وهو
مطروح على سفود معارض عليه د
وحوض الكفه والكفه وعليها ه وفيه
انبوب ينصب منه الشراب الى القدح
وعليه ق وخزانة الشراب وفي اسفلها
ثقب عليه انبوب يقطر منه الشراب الى الكفه
وعليه ر ومصب الشراب في اعلى الخزانة وعليه
ك فمن الواضح الجلي انه متى ملئت الخزانة
شرابا فانه يقطر الى الكفه فتمتلي في مده
ثم تتساعد وتفرغ
ما فيها الى حوض
الكفه فينصب
دفعة واحدة

Figure 16.6 Automaton of female court attendant, in al-Jazari, *Book of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*. Source: Photograph courtesy of Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul. Reproduced with permission.

in addition to the example from al-Jazari's Diyarbakır, the traveler Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217) describes a hydraulic clock by the Jayrun Gate of the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus in 1184, and we have the trilingual inscription of the Norman king Roger II's hydraulic clock, which stood outside the Royal Palace at Palermo, dated 1142 (Amari 1971: 29–39; Ibn Jubayr 1952: 281–282).

The Commercial Sphere

This chapter began with an early eleventh-century shipwreck with a commercial cargo. The ship that sank in Serçe Limanı was plying the waters between Byzantium, Syria, and Egypt. The Italian mercantile republics used privileged relationships with the Byzantine Empire and the rise of the Crusades to create a dominant axis of movement different from the counterclockwise one of Byzantine to Fatimid maritime commerce. This axis ran from north and west (Venice, Genoa, and so on) to south and east (Alexandria, Acre, and so on) and back. At first it largely carried raw materials like European tin, pitch, timber, and wool to be exchanged in Alexandria for spices and manufactured goods, especially cloth. As the twelfth century proceeded, glazed ceramics became cargoes in themselves, transported from the Byzantine Empire to the Crusader states on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere. The exchange of natural resources from northwestern Europe for manufactured products and spices from the eastern Mediterranean never ceased, in fact the trade imbalance between western Europe and the Islamic world was only rectified by the massive transfer of silver bullion from mines in central Europe to the Islamic world. However, during the thirteenth century, the increasing domination of the Italian merchant republics expressed itself not only in trade in luxury goods and commodities or in the acquisition of relics and trophies from the eastern Mediterranean but also in terms of what is called today "technology transfer." In the thirteenth century, Venice and Genoa did not content themselves with importing and distributing enameled glass and glazed ceramic vessels, they set up local production of these vessels, even exporting them to the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. Thus, for instance, Port Saint Symeon ware, an incised tricolor glazed earthenware produced in the Principality of Antioch and the Kingdom of Armenian Cilicia, forms the basis for glazed ceramics produced in Genoa and Liguria, while proto-majolica, produced in southern Italy and Sicily, is derived from North African tin glazed wares. Venetian enameled and gilt glass directly imitated Syrian production. However, the picture of technology transfer and its effect on material culture is complicated by the presence of Italian craftsmen, either seasonally or permanently resident in eastern Mediterranean ports, and Italian establishment of centers of manufacturing there. Examples of technology transfer could be given from the textile arts, if we had better documented examples, because we know that Italian mercantile republics were intimately involved in the trade and manufacture of silks, camlets, and other cloths made from silk, cotton, wool, and linen in the eastern Mediterranean.

The decoration of these objects seems calculated to appear to the widest possible range of market. Glazed earthenware ceramics made in the Aegean under Byzantine or Frankish rule and in Cilician Armenia and Crusader Antioch, and white-bodied calcareous clay and fritware Islamic ceramics decorated in underglaze painted and lustered techniques bore decoration that, when figural, often referred to simplified versions of the princely cycle of hunting, dancing, and so on, or of astrological symbols, or combinations of both. In fact, creative recombination of motifs and themes is a feature of the art of this period, as is a constant play between the abstract nonfigural and the figural. Even bowls with shields and other heraldic imagery seemingly made for Frankish and other Christian markets bore generic imagery.

As Port Saint Symeon ceramics and other non-elite material productions indicate, there was a commercial visual language that paralleled the development of an actual spoken (and to a lesser extent written) language, the mixture of Italian, Greek, Arabic, and other languages known as *lingua franca*; one that evolved in this period to allow merchants to communicate with one another at ports around the Mediterranean (Redford 2004).

The commercial sphere where this visual language circulated provided the context for high-end mass-produced oliphants, referred to above. Multiple coordinates and a more expansive view of localization can also be observed in the production of luxury enameled glassware, which was produced in both Syria and Egypt (Georgopoulou 1999). While mosque lamps, beakers, pitchers, and other vessels were produced bearing the name of the ruling sultan, and seem to have been intended primarily for a local market, similar vessels were also created with depictions of Christian themes, and were seemingly made for the pilgrimage trade, whether undertaken by local or western Christians. In Crusader territories, at least, the glass trade was largely in the hands of Jewish craftsmen. The trade in glass slag and cullet remarked in the Serçe Limanı shipwreck is documented as continuing through the period of the Crusades.

Inscriptions on luxury glass produced in Syria and silks produced in countries all around the eastern Mediterranean constitute other examples of the overlap between the court and the marketplace. As noted above, it is well known that enameled and gilded glass vessels produced in Syria were prized in Europe (and imitated in Venice). Less well known is the role of inscriptions on these vessels. Seemingly, the iteration of long lists of sultanic titles in Arabic found on many of these vessels should have nothing to do with their export, often to Christian lands, not in the least because many of these titles were belligerently Islamic. And yet the titles themselves are almost always generic, and, even when found in Islamic contexts, repeat themselves until the inscriptional band is filled, and without regard to the names and titles of any specific ruler. Parallels can be drawn between the role of inscriptions on these glass vessels and those on luxury fabrics, with the “label,” the *tiraz* band of Islamic writing that once proudly announced the royal workshop where it was produced, displayed prominently on the upper part of the sleeve of the garment made from it. With the commercialization of luxury textiles, like glass production, the inscriptions on *tiraz* also seem to have become jumbled. Islamic writing was necessary to impart cachet to a garment or drinking cup, regardless, it seems, of its literal meaning (Jacoby 2004: 216–217; see also Hofmann and Redford, CHAPTER 16).

Similarly, silver-inlaid brass or bronze metalwork objects were produced for both local markets and trade. Like the glass, some pieces of metalwork were decorated with Christian scenes. These scenes appear on objects comprising candlesticks, ewers, cylindrical boxes, incense burners, trays, a basin, and a canteen, representing a full range of styles and functions and may be helpful in exploring issues of shared vocabulary, identity, and exchange (Hoffman 2004: 129–142). The style and motifs of vegetal designs, hunting, and astrology are all typical of the larger body of Syro-Mesopotamian silver-inlaid metalwork made during the first half of the thirteenth century. Christian iconography stems from “local” traditions of Syrian and Coptic Christian iconography, documented in Syriac and related Coptic liturgical manuscripts and painting belonging to the Christian sacred sphere (Baer 1989; Hoffman 2004; Hunt 1985; Katzenstein and Lowry 1983; Khoury 1998). Syrian Christians were fully integrated in the Islamic culture at large. Above all, however, Christian and non-Christian motifs were not intended to be separated. The “Christian” themes chosen could resonate for both Christian and non-Christian users.

Focusing on one celebrated work in this group, the “Freer canteen” (Figure 16.7), recent studies have suggested a Mesopotamian localization, stressing the specific connection with Mesopotamian (Jaziran) monasteries (Ecker and Fitzherbert 2012). A connection with a Mesopotamian shrine may certainly be considered as a possibility, especially one such as Mar Behnam/Dayr al-Khidr near Mosul, which would have been revered by multiple groups of Christians, Jews, and Muslims; where a shared visual vocabulary may have been employed and where imagery on the same work could be interpreted according to the perceptions of these different users and viewers. Yet such spheres of interaction need not be limited to Mesopotamia. Rather, by opening up the range of connections, there is greater opportunity to grasp the full complexities within a shared visual vocabulary. Even if, in some cases, the site of production can be identified, it is possible, as we have seen for the Port Saint Symeon ceramics, that the circulation of portable works provides the potential for expansion well beyond any individual site. A few examples will be provided here to demonstrate the need to keep the networks of connection open.

An important piece of evidence from within the Christian Syriac sphere itself is a thirteenth-century *flabellum*, a fan serving a specific liturgical function within the Syriac ritual. Bas Snelders and Mat Immerzeel have convincingly drawn the comparison between this *flabellum* and the Freer Canteen, both in the format and the subject of the Virgin and Child as the central representation on each work. The inscription on the rim of the *flabellum* reads, “these fans were made for the Monastery

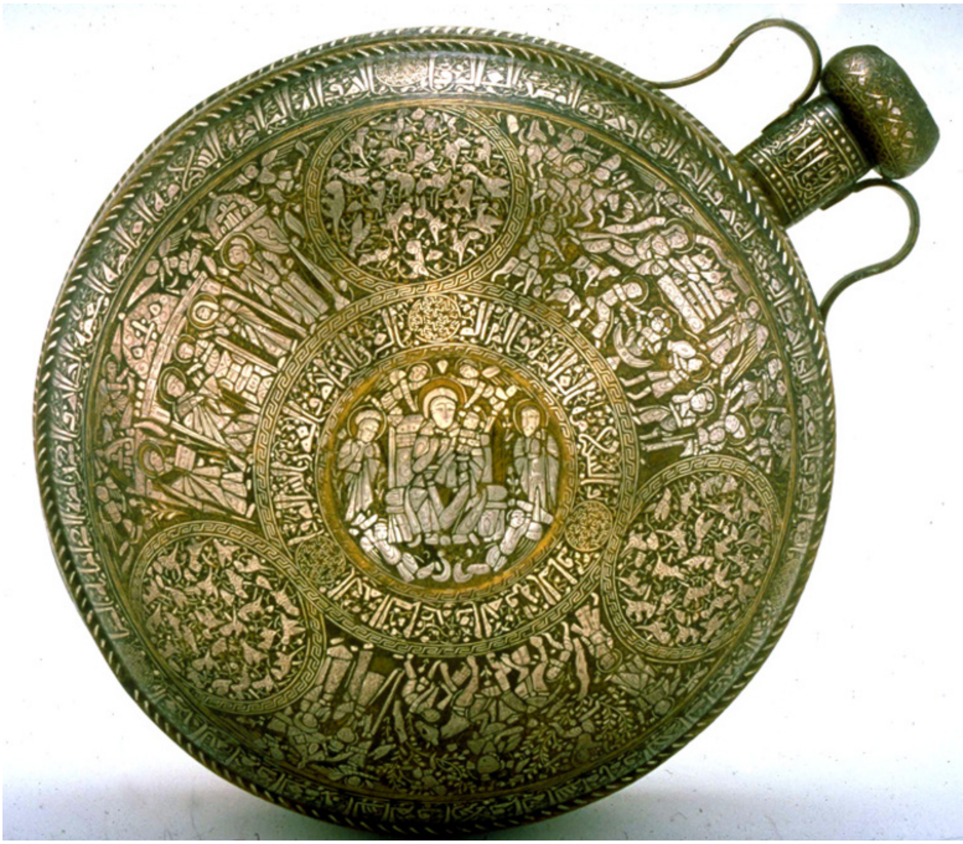

FIGURE 16.7 Canteen, brass inlaid with silver, Syria or Mesopotamia, *c.* 1250. Source: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., F 1941.10. Reproduced with permission.

of the House of the Mother of God Mart(y) Maryam in the desert of Scetis, the year 1514 of the Greeks (1202–03)," making it clear that regardless of where it was made, it was made for a monastery in Dayr al-Suriyani in the Wadi Natrun (the ancient Setis) in Egypt (Snelders and Immerzeel 2004: 134–136; Snelders 2010).

Another context for the silver-inlaid metalwork pieces with Christian themes may be seen in two luxury works that are closely connected with the Freer canteen: a basin at the Freer Gallery of Art and a tray at the Louvre Museum in Paris. What makes these works particularly significant is that they come from the realm of the court. Both are clearly inscribed with name of the Ayyubid sultan al-Salih Najm al-Din, who ruled in Diyarbakır (1232–1239), in Egypt (1240–1249), and in Damascus (1245–1249). The appearance of al-Salih's investiture title, "friend of the Commander of the Faithful" (*khalil amir al-muʾminin*), on the interior of the Freer basin may specify the period of his rule over Syria and Egypt following his formal caliphal investiture in 1247 (Hoffman 2004: 132).

Thus, there is little doubt that the same visual vocabulary served both the (Christian) sacred sphere and the (Islamic) dynastic political sphere, with the likely exception of Christological scenes such as the crucifixion, which highlighted areas of doctrinal controversy between Christianity and Islam. Distinctions in meanings between these contexts certainly existed, but they cannot be deciphered by separating and parsing out the "Christian" and "Islamic" visual themes. It is likely that Muslim/non-Christian viewers and owners would fully understand these Christian themes within their Christian contexts (Khoury 1998). Meanings were tied to the particular circumstances of these works, where differences were folded into broader distinctions of context, function, and reception. In the case of the Ayyubid court work of the Freer basin, for example, the Muslim ruler may have read the Christian themes within the overarching context of royalty and power. Hence, Jesus may be a reference to the ruler himself as the just and divine ruler (Katzenstein and Lowry 1983: 65). The flexibility and range of function and patronage observed here for the silver-inlaid metalwork with Christian themes is also perfectly consistent with the overall trends of production and demand for Syro-Mesopotamian silver-inlaid metalwork. Objects in this technique enjoyed enormous popularity and value throughout every stratum of Syro-Mesopotamian culture, so that not only was there porosity between the boundaries of the (Christian) sacred and the (Islamic) political spheres but also between the boundaries of class. As has been noted, the quality and decoration of works for the middle class and aristocracy are often so similar that it is difficult to tell these works apart without specific information given in inscriptions. Indeed, the commercial nature of both glass and metalwork provided for the extraordinary dissemination and circulation of these works in great number throughout the Mediterranean as well as in northern Europe.

There is yet another context beyond the Christian and Islamic: the acquisition and use of these objects by the Frankish settlers in the Levant, who could interpret these Christian themes in terms of the rhetoric of the Crusades. This rhetoric appeared on both sides. On the Freer basin, the references in the inscriptions to al-Salih as a holy warrior (*murabit*) and the defender of the frontiers (*muthagir*) are particularly poignant for al-Salih, because he died fighting the Crusade of St. Louis in Egypt in 1249. For the Crusaders, the objects were likely tied to the journey of pilgrimage and crusade that forged the temporal and geographic connection between the sacred topography of the Holy Land and the ultimate destination of the work, whether it was in the Latin kingdom or in Europe. Ultimately, while these works of silver-inlaid metalwork shared a vocabulary across a variety of contexts, there was no singular meaning conveyed through this vocabulary nor was there a singular context. Instead, it was a rich multiplicity of contexts that provided the full meanings for these works.

While the Mediterranean basin forms the geographical center of this chapter, and maritime commerce rightly takes center stage, it is worth pointing out a documentary bias in our knowledge of the trade of the period. Genoese and Venetian archives contain material governing the places and spaces of this chapter, while, apart from the *Geniza* of Fustat, the treasure trove of documents relating to the Jewish community of Fustat, there is no archive relating to other commerce at this time.

The spurt of building of caravanserais in Zangid and Ayyubid Syria, but especially in Seljuq Anatolia in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, points to the importance of overland trade, with caravan routes integrating inland cities with ports. Although he did not stay in a caravanserai when traveling between Ayyubid Damascus and the Frankish port of Tyre during his return from pilgrimage to Mecca in 1184, the Iberian traveler Ibn Jubayr gives us the most vivid picture of the mix of religions, languages, and peoples at the time of the Crusades (Ibn Jubayr 1952: 315–325).

The size and frequency of caravanserais bear mute testimony to the importance of overland trade in many of the goods we know only from Italian records, and the integration of Syria and Anatolia with routes to Mesopotamia, Iran, and the Caucasus. By themselves, they stand as counterweights to histories of architecture that dwell exclusively on elite religious and palatial products, and the emphasis on maritime trade that is partially due to the preservation of archives in Genoa and Venice, with nothing similar from the Islamic world. While caravanserais are largely products of elite circles, being sponsored by ruling sultans and amirs, their function embraced the whole of medieval society. Although urban commercial buildings from this period in the Islamic Mediterranean have been replaced by Ottoman and other later buildings, they must have formed a prominent part of the urbanscape, as prominent as the *loggia*s and *fondachi* of medieval northern Italy that still survive in cities like Milan, Florence, and Bologna. One mid-thirteenth century caravanserai in Seljuq Anatolia, the Karatay Han, was likely built by sultans (it is certainly built to sultanic scale) before being taken over by an amir serving as regent (see CHAPTER 13). This is a grand commercial space, with both a large courtyard and vaulted hall for humans, their pack animals, and cargoes, VIP quarters, an audience iwan, and even a bathhouse (see Crane and Korn, CHAPTER 13). With state guarantees for merchants and their cargoes, it is no wonder that these palaces of commerce and the states that built them both benefited and benefited from commerce in everything from commodities to rare textiles, precious objects, jewels, and expensive spices. Alone among caravanserais, the Karatay Han's endowment deed has come down to us. In it, the amir, himself a Muslim convert of Anatolian Christian slave origin, mandates that all coming to his caravanserai, whether man or woman, free or slave, Muslim or non-Muslim, be served the same hearty meal of mutton stew and bread free of charge.

Conclusion

We have attempted to bring greater understanding to the art of the eastern Mediterranean between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries by presenting a more holistic and integrated approach to the study of this material. Instead of classifying the art into traditional taxonomic categories, the focus here has been on the dynamic process of transculturation that created connections across political and religious spheres, spatially as well as temporally. The fluidity of boundaries in the larger Mediterranean world explains the development and widespread dissemination of a shared visual vocabulary that appeared in both the court and commercial spheres. This fluidity also facilitated intersections of visual motifs between these spheres. Yet, while the shared vocabulary mapped out the territory of exchange and was recognizable as such, the vocabulary also defied any label of unitary or flattened "Mediterranean style." On the contrary, the pathways traversed and the connections forged along the way provided for a rich variety of diverse encounters and multiple possibilities of meanings. Meaning would emerge from the particular interactions and contexts in which these forms and motifs were used. The Mediterranean provided a global arena for the circulation of a recognizable visual language with expansive possibilities for interactivity. At the same time, the multiplicity of intersections created very particular local meanings, one monument and one object at a time.

Notes

1 In order to meet the requirements of the chapter, the citations and bibliography included here are by no means complete, but they may serve as guides to the fuller literature. We regret that it was not possible to consult *A Companion to Mediterranean History* edited by Peregrine Horden and Sharon Kinoshita since it appeared after our chapter had been submitted. In addition, space limitations did not allow us to examine primarily religious art in any sustained way.

2 In this chapter, we use the term "Crusader" to apply both to Europeans going on Crusade, as well as Europeans who settled in the states founded as the result of the First Crusade in the eastern Mediterranean, and their artistic production. This blanket term is used for simplicity's sake, and in full recognition that much literature on the Crusades differentiates between Crusaders and the inhabitants of these states and their artistic and architectural production, which is also called "Frankish," with the states themselves called "Frankish," "Frankish states of the Outremer," "Outremer," and so on.

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17

Patronage and the Idea of an Urban Bourgeoisie

Anna Contadini

Given the complex and highly charged political and cultural meanings associated with it, especially in Marxist thought, the term “bourgeoisie” needs to be used with a degree of caution. Nevertheless, the concept of an emergent bourgeoisie in the Middle East, with wealth acquired through mercantile activity, is one that has been repeatedly invoked since the nineteenth century. It was mentioned by von Kremer (1875–1877: vol. 2, 273, 288–293), followed by Mez (1922: 442; 1937: 470), who, possibly reacting to Weber’s opposition of Western cities (with their emergent bourgeois communities) and “Asiatic” ones (Weber 1921: 81), considered that by the tenth century merchants had actually become the bearers of Islamic civilization.

Goitein (1966: 219) made even more ambitious claims, attributing to the bourgeoisie the development of the Muslim religious sciences, and going so far as to suggest that “the full-fledged religion of Islam, as it appears to us through the writings of the third and fourth centuries of the Muslim era, is pervaded by the spirit and ideas of the rising merchant class.”

However, defining the nature and cultural purchase of the middling class, over and above the central fact of its generation of disposable income, is no easy matter. Goitein conceded that “the history of the Muslim middle class … has not yet been sufficiently studied” (Goitein 1967–1993: vol. 2, 2–3) and made the important point that in the period in question (*c.* 950–1250) it is difficult to find evidence of a centralized state controlling the various aspects of society, by which one may understand an imposed set of constraints and obligations within and against which a particular class consciousness might develop. Much, he infers, was left to the internal cohesiveness of groups defined by religious affiliation and enjoying juridical autonomy, while at the same time he tends to discuss the

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Christians and Jews mentioned in his sources in the context of a middle class incorporating the medical profession, government officials, and skilled artisans as well as merchants.

More recently, Shoshan (1991: 76–77) has in large part followed Goitein's analysis that sets forth the concept of a tenth-century Middle Eastern "rising bourgeoisie" (Goitein 1966). While raising further pertinent questions regarding the cultural contribution of the bourgeoisie and how it might be considered original, he argued that Mez exaggerated the cultural role of merchants at the expense not only of rulers but also and especially of scholars.

Among art historians, Ettinghausen (1943: 207) had already anticipated Goitein, talking of a "*nouveau riche*" class and of a "rising merchant" class, albeit in relation to the twelfth century rather than Goitein's tenth. Ettinghausen then (1955) tackled the problem of the extent to which the art of the bourgeoisie was influenced by courtly art and, conversely, how much courtly art might be influenced by the arts of non-aristocratic classes. Expanding on Ettinghausen's ideas, Grabar (1970) published a study of the illustrations in the manuscripts of al-Hariri's *Maqamat* (Assemblies) that proliferated in Iraq and Syria during the thirteenth century, illustrations that he directly linked to "the bourgeoisie and the arts." Emphasizing the increase in figural representations – also occurring in other media – this "revolution" in the visual vocabulary should be linked, according to Grabar, to an "opening" of the arts to an appreciative bourgeois class, resulting in the inclusion of representations of a range of buildings and human functions with which merchant patrons would be familiar.

At the same time Grabar recognized the difficulty of encapsulating bourgeois taste. Yet it is on the basis of a presumed contrast between court taste and that of other segments of society that art historians had earlier introduced the vexed concept of "realism." Kühnel's (1929: 407) notion of a "realistic" style in relation to tenth- to twelfth-century Fatimid art was echoed by Ettinghausen (1942: 122), who speaks of both "realistic" and "popular" styles of painting, including depictions on Fatimid ceramics. In explanation, Kühnel had referred to a Shiʿite tolerance of representation, thereby divorcing what he deemed realistic from any specific social locus, while Ettinghausen (1956: 271), in a later study on realism in Islamic art, cautiously postponed consideration of this argument. He chose, rather, to stress a contrast between the "realistic," "popular" elements of Fatimid art and the more formal and abstract earlier style of the Abbasids, associating the "realistic" style with the choice of scenes that represented, for him, everyday life.

The association is, though, rather problematic, for some of these scenes derive from a long iconographical tradition that can be traced back to Hellenistic and late classical times, thereby calling into question the notion of newly injected "everyday life." It needs to be emphasized that the notion of "realism" and what is "popular" is the construction of the scholar: there are no textual sources to support it, so that the implied divorce between courtly aesthetics (more refined) and non-courtly aesthetics (more earthy) is ultimately an interpretative assumption.

It should be added, however, that Ettinghausen (1956: 251) does not refer to a specifically bourgeois dimension: it would be left to Grabar to argue for this particular association. In any event, we have a clear recognition among art historians of the ability of an increasing spectrum of the urban population to acquire a range of artifacts that in terms of design cannot simply be regarded as derivative of court models.

A glimpse into the range of valuables (including mules and women, here treated as objects) held by the urban well-to-do is afforded by the hitherto unpublished account that Safi al-Din al-Urmawi (d. 1294) related to the historian Hasan al-Irbili of events in Baghdad after the Mongol conquest of the city in 1258 (al-ʿUmari 1988: 309–313). Himself no aristocrat, but a calligrapher, the master, indeed, of the celebrated Iraqi calligrapher Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi, and a renowned court musician (Neubauer 1995), al-Urmawi represented his quarter in its desperate dealings with the particular Mongol general to whom it had been allotted. Inevitably, safety, indeed life itself, had to be bought dearly, and he speaks of some 50 wealthy individuals in the quarter who contributed their possessions. On the first day al-Urmawi was himself host to the general, spreading for him sumptuous carpets given to him by the caliph and ornately decorated brocade curtains, and, after a rich meal, serving him wine in gilded Aleppan glass and in silver vessels, followed by musical entertainment. Finally, he presented the general and his companions with choice gold and silver vessels, money, gold, and a considerable amount of splendid fabrics. Largely derived from caliphal largesse, al-Urmawi's own possessions may have been atypical, but when the other wealthy inhabitants were pressed to make similar contributions on the following days, they produced items to the value of 50 000 dinars, including gold items, splendid fabrics, and weaponry, thereby enabling al-Urmawi to make gifts on the second day of treasures (*dhakhaʾir*), gold and money, and on the third day of choice pearls, precious jewels, a mule with caliphal trappings, and a fine garment. Al-Urmawi was then summoned to meet the Mongol ruler Hulegu himself, and presented him with further splendid vessels of gold and decorated silver. The range of artifacts mentioned – jewelry, pearls, gold, silver, metalwork, a variety of fabrics, and the specific reference to gilded glass from Aleppo – is striking, and the absence of ivory or ceramics may be no more than chance, as al-Urmawi's account was a dramatic narrative rather than a comprehensive catalogue. It provides a vivid demonstration of material prosperity to add to the more exhaustive evidence of mercantile wealth analyzed by Goitein and undermines the assumption that, in the absence of supporting evidence, luxury objects should be more or less automatically associated with princely commissions and royal ateliers. Indeed, surviving artifacts clearly demonstrate the ability of persons outside the court to acquire, and in some cases commission, luxury objects. Thus alongside those identified with caliphs, kings, or high court officials, such as the D'Arenberg basin – a silver-inlaid brass basin produced in Egypt or Syria around 1240, which bears the name of Sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub (Atıl 1975: 65–68, cat. 27) – there are others where the inscription is either anonymous or mentions the name of a merchant or scholar. An anonymous example is an equally luxurious late thirteenth-century Syrian or Egyptian brass basin inlaid with silver (Gabrieli and Scerrato 1979: pls. 206–208), with imagery combining astrology with courtly pursuits and inscriptions expressing good wishes to an unnamed owner.

There are parallel examples of metalwork with names (see also Allan and Kanaan, CHAPTER 18). One is an early thirteenth-century metal bowl in the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. no. 634-1872) from Khurasan, with two inlaid inscriptions. High on the main body of the bowl, running all around it below the rim, the larger inscription is in a rather splendid *naskh* and consists of good wishes. The other, divided into four sections separated by inlaid floral medallions set at regular intervals, is in a beautiful, floriated angular script and reads "divine grace to its owner/Yusuf ibn Ahmad/the Tabrizi merchant/may his fate remain auspicious." Melikian-Chirvani (1982: 126–127, no. 55) has suggested that the inscription might have been added at the specific request of the patron. But it does not follow that it must have been inscribed later: integral to the whole decorative scheme, the inscription is better read as part of the original plan as commissioned by or for Yusuf ibn Ahmad than as an insert on an off-the-peg object.

Another example is a pear-shaped ewer with a lamp-shaped spout in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (probably Khurasan, late twelfth century, Figure 17.1). In addition to bands of inlaid inscriptions with good wishes, it is inscribed "owned by the doctor in religious law (*al-shaykh al-faqih*) Muhammad/ibn ʿAli al-Sijzi; made by Payadar" (Melikian-Chirvani 1982: 74–75, figs. 43–44). In two sections, one on each side of a central decorative medallion, the inscription is in an undecorated angular script, which suggests that it could well have been added later, when Muhammad ibn ʿAli al-Sijzi took possession of it. That the name of an owner could be a later addition is confirmed by the presence on this ewer of a further inscription, in cursive *naskh* script, identifying a subsequent owner, one Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-[I]sfahani. To these metalwork examples may be added a ceramic plate painted in luster, *c.* twelfth century, with the name ʿUmar ibn Ahmad al-Tusi, a member of a bourgeois family in Tus (Stern and Walzer 1963; Watson 1985: 52).

It is difficult to determine the social milieu of the many anonymous artifacts that have inscriptions of a generally benedictory nature, even if they are of equivalent (or in some cases even higher) quality to those known to have been made for princes. Inscriptions with the formula "blessing on the owner" (*baraka li-sahibih*), simple or expanded, are particularly common on metalwork, but they also appear on other media such as woodwork, as on a ninth-century Egyptian, Tulunid panel (*baraka wa-yumn wa-saʿada li-sa[hibihi]*) (Hayward Gallery 1976: 282, no. 435. Figure 17.2); ceramics, as on an early thirteenth-century Iranian vase (Fehérvári 2000: 124, no. 152); glass, as on a ninth–tenth-century cup from Egypt, Syria, or Iraq (Jenkins 1986: 20, no. 17); and rock crystal, as on a *c.* first half of the eleventh century Fatimid Egyptian fragmentary flask (Contadini 1998: 37, pl. 5).

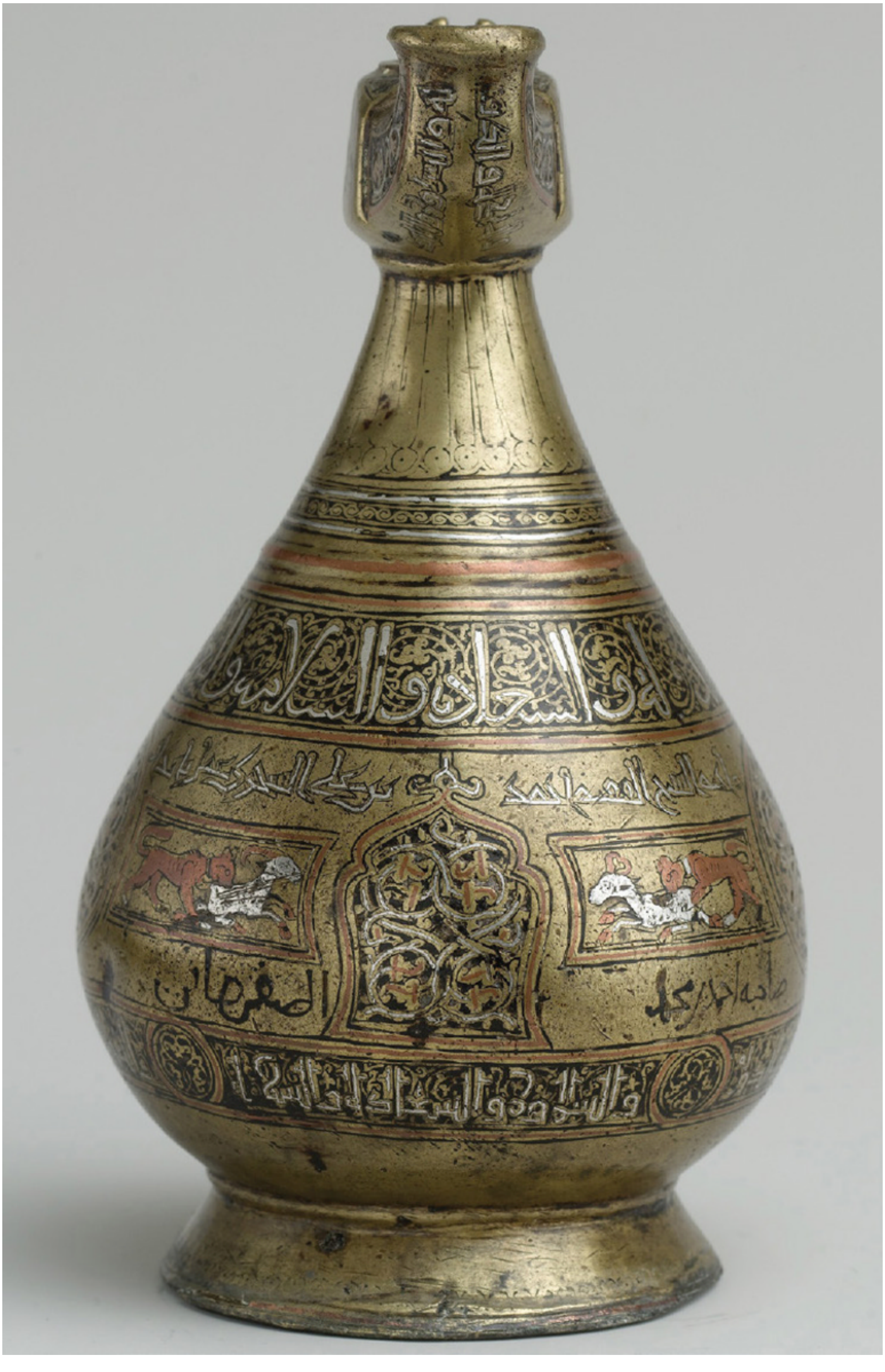

Figure 17.1 Silver-inlaid, pear-shaped, metal ewer with a lamp-shaped spout, with inscriptions including one identifying the owner as a "doctor in religious law." Probably Khurasan, late twelfth century. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 54.64. Source: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

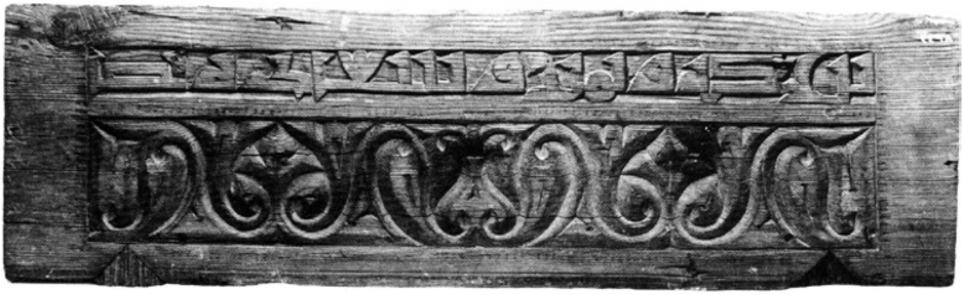

FIGURE 17.2 Wood panel with an inscription of best wishes to its owner. Egypt, Tulunid period, ninth century. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, no. 3498. Source: Hayward 1976: 282, no. 435. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

There is no single, obvious interpretation for such anonymity. Some metalwork and rock crystal items might be conceived of as individually commissioned gifts, possibly diplomatic. On the other hand, the many ceramic objects with generic blessings suggest, instead of a commission, a form of industrial production tied to retail outlets, and the same can be said for artifacts on which we have names stamped or painted, such as the ninth- to tenth-century Iraqi or Iranian stamped glass objects with the name Husayn M[uhammad], as on a bottle and fragments of stamps in the Corning Museum of Glass (inv. no. 59.1.571; and inv. nos. 59.1.516, 59.1.517, 59.1.518). Other examples are Fatimid, late tenth- or early eleventh-century luster painted objects, both ceramic and glass, with the name Saʿd (Contadini 1998: chapter 3, pls. 34b, 36a–c for ceramics and fig. 33 for a glass example). Whether interpreted as individual (Jenkins 1988) or brand names, they point to a particular source almost certainly producing for a well-to-do urban market.

Also, inscriptions containing formulaic blessings for a sultan may be found on objects presumably not made for a sultan. This is the case, for example, with two gilded and enameled glass beakers now in Baltimore (Atıl 1981: 126–127; Carswell 1998, Figure 17.3), attributed to Syria, and datable to the first half of the thirteenth century. Both the *naskh/thuluth* script and the content, "glory to our lord the sultan, the royal, the diligent, the wise, etc.," are often encountered on Ayyubid and Mamluk material from Syria and Egypt, but the iconographical themes and the style of clothing of the figures painted on the beakers clearly associate them with a Christian environment. In particular, we find stylized but easily recognizable representations of the Holy Sepulchre, a figure possibly of Christ riding a donkey, priests/monks, and at the same time city landmarks such as the Dome of the Rock and, as identified by Carswell (1998: 62), a minaret with parapet and dome on the north side of the Haram enclosure in Jerusalem. Fragments with similar iconography have been excavated at Hama (Riis 1957: 93, nos. 286–288), suggesting Syria as a production center. Because of the explicitly Christian connections of their iconography the beakers might have served as "souvenirs," but not so much

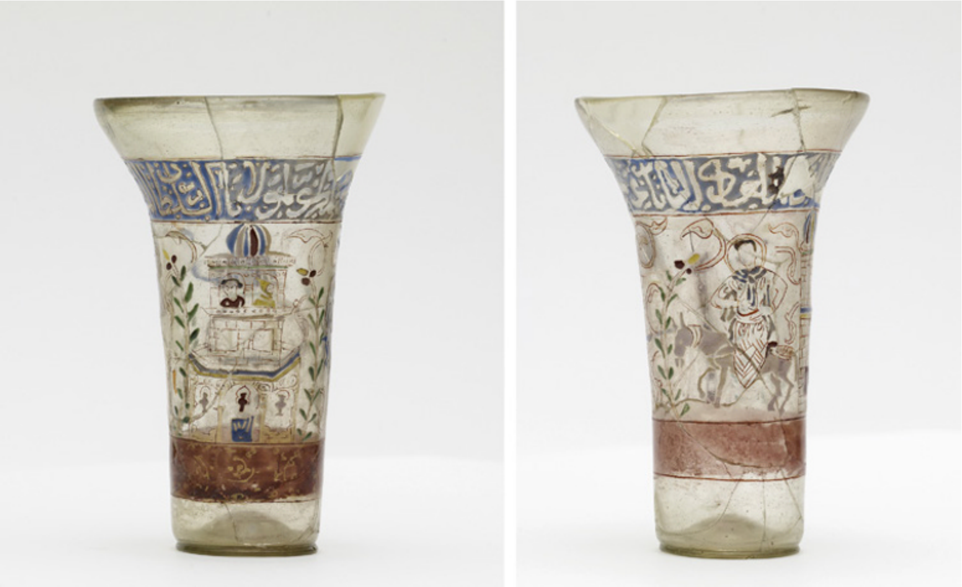

Figure 17.3 Two glass beakers with enameled and gilded painted decoration showing Christian scenes, possibly made for local Christian markets. Attributed to Syria, datable to the first half of the thirteenth century. Source: Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 47.17 and 47.18. Reproduced with permission.

for European pilgrims as for the local Christian elites, especially considering the mixture of Christian and Muslim symbols on the same object, and the typical Arabic inscriptions (Atıl 1981: 126). The quality of the glass and the use of expensive enamels and gold in the decoration demonstrate that they were intended for a completely different market from pilgrim flasks in plain undecorated glass. The importance of the latter, emphasized by their being transported in cases especially made for them (Shalem 1998: esp. figs. 16.1, 16.2), resided wholly in their contents, probably the balsam that is one of the principal ingredients of chrism (Milwright 2003: 207).

For the textiles with inscription bands, generically termed *tiraz*, we can now say with some confidence that an industrial system was in place, producing goods for different markets (see also Sokoly, chapter 11). The sources talk endlessly about rich textiles made for varied sections of society, from princes to merchants, from intellectuals to singers, and there would have been variations in quality geared to differences in disposable income. The association of the term *tiraz* with the court and the ruler, attributable to its early use to designate a richly embroidered garment, is thus misleading. More typically, we may speak of garments and textiles with *tiraz* bands dating from the eighth to twelfth centuries, produced on an industrial scale during the Fatimid period by workshops in the Nile delta supplying both the court and the general market: the distinction between "royal/private and public tiraz"

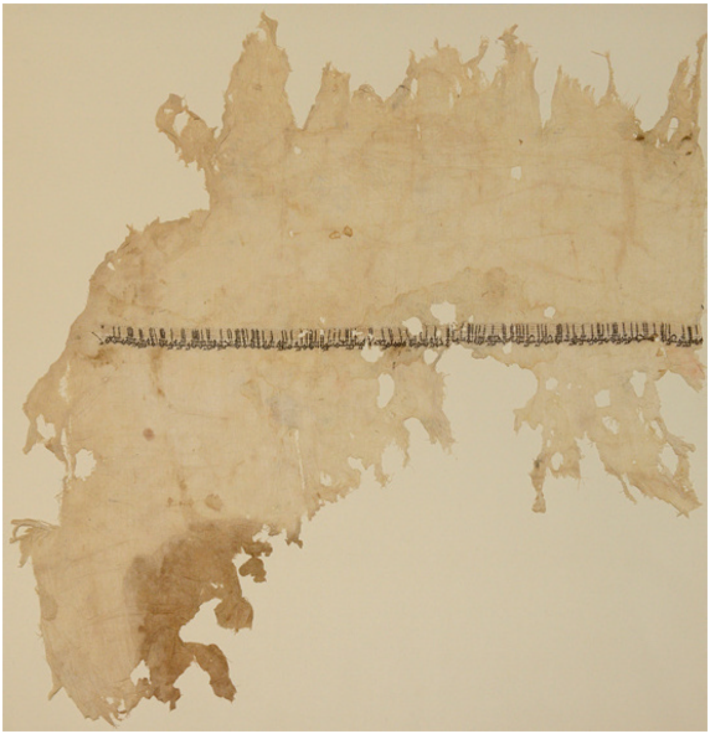

Figure 17.4 *Tiraz* textile with an inscription referring to production for a general market (*tiraz al-ʿamma*). Tuna (Egypt), 388 (998). Athens, Benaki Museum, 15006. Source: Benaki Museum. Reproduced with permission.

(*tiraz al-khassa* and *al-ʿamma*) relates less to workshops than to clienteles, with court consumption financed by the "royal/private diwan" (*diwan al-khass*) while *tiraz al-ʿamma* production was intended for the general market (Figure 17.4) (Sokoly 1997; Contadini 1998: 43–54. For the example in the Benaki Museum, no. 15006, see Combe 1935: no. 8).

The evidence for royal workshops is in any case largely circumstantial. For example, the presence of inscriptions on tenth-century carved ivories from the Madinat al-Zahraʾ Palace in al-Andalus identifying them with individuals at the court has been accepted as pointing to the existence of a royal workshop (Holod 1992: 190–191). In consequence, contemporary ivory boxes with inscriptions of the generic good wishes type (which are not necessarily of inferior quality, as has been argued), such as the casket in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, dated 355 (966) and attributed to Madinat al-Zahraʾ, have been considered products of a separate commercial enterprise (Hayward Gallery 1976: 152, no. 147). Yet a single workshop or a group of carvers working on commission could readily cater for different clienteles, and we encounter the same range of motifs and carving techniques whether these objects mention princely figures or not.

For an example of a luxury artifact representative of the cultural and social ambitions of a wealthy merchant we may turn to the inlaid cast metal vessel known as the Bobrinsky bucket (Ivanov 1990: 16–17, no. 30, 56–57 and previous literature. Figure 17.5). Dated by an inscription on the handle top to Muharram 559 (December 1163), the piece itself is a striking example of calligraphy allied to iconography representing such standard courtly themes as hunting and musical entertainment. Although the inscription on the rim ends in high-flown Arabic, it begins, unusually, in Persian, telling us that the bucket was "ordered" (*farmudan*) by a certain ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn ʿAbdallah al-Rashidi as a gift to the merchant in question, Khuja Rukn al-Din Rashid al-Din ʿAzizi ibn Abu-l-Husayn al-Zanjani. In addition to naming and praising the recipient, it is of interest in that the inscription indicates the division of labor between the caster Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahid and the decorator Hajib Masʿud ibn Ahmad. It also identifies the place of production, Herat, noted by al-Qazwini (d. 1283) as a center for inlaid brass, the finest examples of which were exported (al-Qazwini 1848–1849, vol. 2, 323).

Ettinghausen distinguished three classes of metalwork: pieces for the general market with inscriptions of good wishes; those with the name of the buyer discreetly inserted; and high quality commissioned pieces with a name included in the inscription. Predictably, he assigned the bucket to the second, and concluded (1943: 199–203) from the comparatively inferior quality of the cursive *naskh* of the inscription naming the merchant that it might well be a later addition, one that linked the bucket to "the *nouveau riche* of the rising merchant class of the XII century which accumulated wealth, titles, and art in a somewhat indiscriminate manner." For all Ettinghausen's acuity, one might wonder here whether "indiscriminate" is any more than an instinctive expression of prejudice, implying that rulers displayed discrimination and the lower orders not. Further, the fact that titles are imitated (rather than accumulated) points not to the acquisition of power but to a desire within the merchant class to emulate certain aspects of court life. These may well have included the aesthetic domain, including the institution of *khilʿa*, the gifting by rulers of garments embroidered with their names (Gordon 2001). The Geniza letters, the trove of medieval documents found in the synagogue of Fustat, indicate that in addition to government officials such robes of honor could be given to doctors, musicians, and merchants (Goitein 1967–1993: vol. 2, 604, note 28) and Goitein notes, in consequence, that "the custom of giving clothing embroidered with names and blessings spread among them" as well (Goitein 1967–1993: vol. 4, 184; also vol. 2, 351). As a result, we have extensive production of textiles and *tiraz*, initially stored in warehouses. The interpretation of the names of the buyer and the merchant on the Bobrinsky bucket as later insertions points to a similar scenario. Thus as well as commissioning artifacts, wealthy merchants and others could be important consumers of ready-made artifacts available from workshops producing objects of great value (as well as, presumably, other more everyday wares) for buyers-to-be, and not only in response to specific commissions (Kana'an 2009: 200–201).

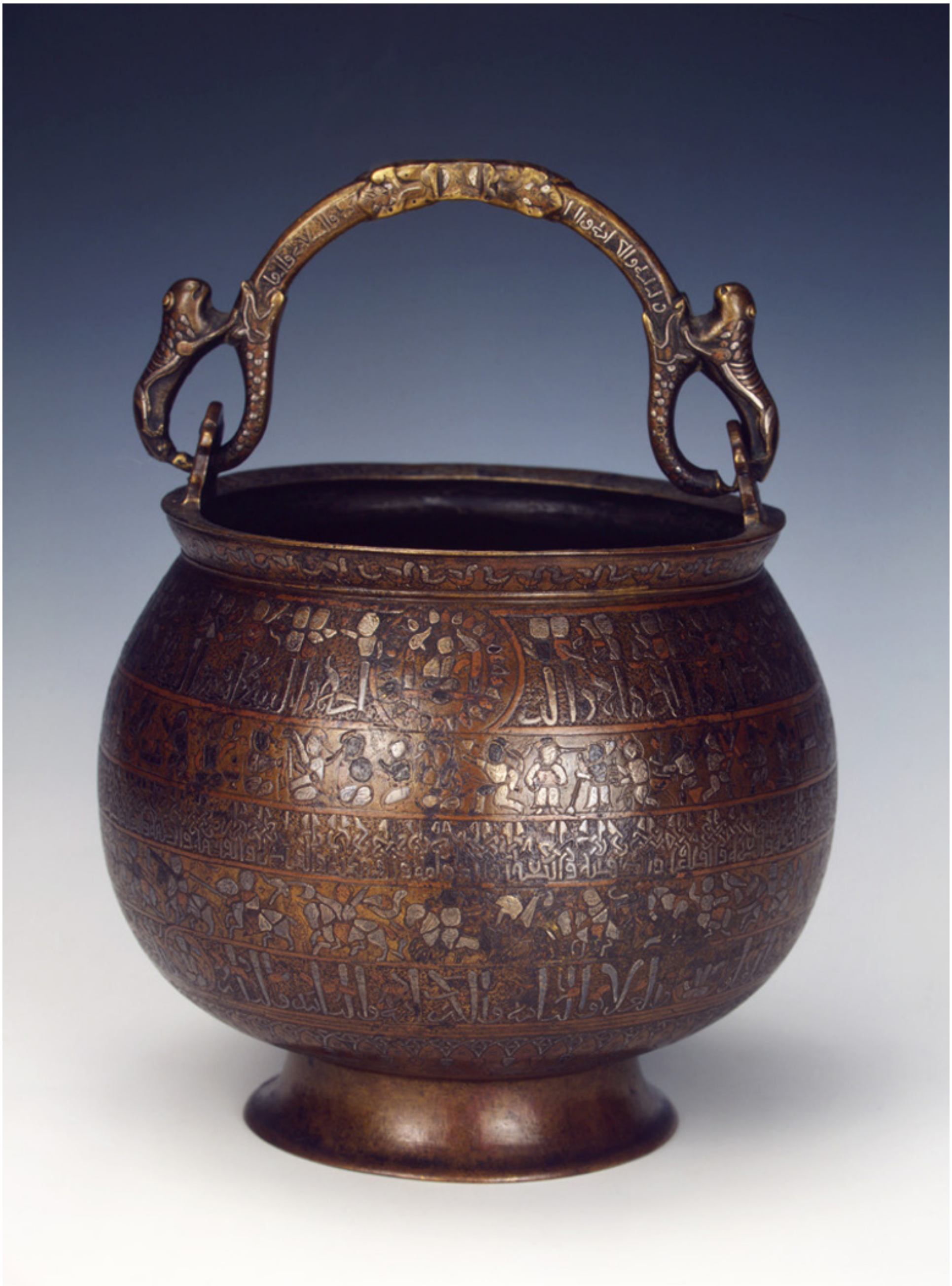

Figure 17.5 Bobrinsky bucket. Herat, dated Muharram 559 (December 1163). Brass, silver, and copper; cast, forged, and decorated with inlay. Height 18.5 cm. Inv. no. IR-2268. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Source: © The State Hermitage Museum. Photo by Vladimir Terebenin.

In addition, their economic resources would doubtless have been used to acquire valuable objects without inscriptions, most obviously jewelry. From the reports of travelers and historians we learn of the crafting of beautiful rock crystal and metalwork objects in the Cairo bazaar and, during the later Mamluk period, of beautiful gilded and enameled glass being produced in commercial areas of Aleppo and Damascus (Nasir-i Khusraw 1986: 53–54 for Cairo; for the glass in Aleppo al-Qazwini 1848–1849: vol. 2, 123; and for Mamluk glass Lamm 1929–1930: vol. 1, 65). Bourgeois spending power would presumably also have extended to other fields of artistic production, such as illustrated manuscripts, although little evidence survives from before the thirteenth century, when we begin to encounter examples of illustrated texts that are usually defined as scientific (covering astronomy, botany, zoology, and medicine), with Cairo, Damascus, Mosul, and Baghdad as principal centers of production.

Market mechanisms are, though, difficult to define: during this later period, although possibly also before, scribes, like artists, moved around, working for different patrons and in different media (Blair 1985), and even showed entrepreneurial flair by themselves hiring painters and binders (Contadini 2012: 162). Given the diverse subject matter of these manuscripts, we may speak of a patronage base allying the intelligentsia to the merchant class within a more broadly conceived bourgeoisie, one whose interests and aesthetic preferences, as compared with those of the court, might be productively investigated through such illustrated manuscripts. For example, it has been suggested, given its subject matter, that the anonymous romance *Hadith Bayad wa Riyad* (The Story of Bayad and Riyad) is a likely example of a text favored by a non-aristocratic audience. It survives in an illustrated manuscript in the Maghribi script (D'Ottone 2013), which places it in the western Islamic lands, most probably Spain, while its paintings suggest on stylistic grounds a dating to the thirteenth century. In its current condition, the manuscript offers no specific clue to patronage, but the narrative (the male protagonist of which is a merchant) may be considered a guide to courtly behavior for a bourgeois readership with aspiration to gentility (Robinson 2005: 97–98). For Ettinghausen (1943: 207), similarly, two of the illustrated manuscripts of Hariri's picaresque and linguistically virtuosic *Maqamat* exhibit "a style truly reflecting the life of the middle classes in the cities of the Seljuk period." One was probably produced in Baghdad in 1237 (Paris, BnF, ms. arabe 5847) and the other, *c.* 1225, is also attributable to Baghdad (St Petersburg, Academy of Sciences, Ms. S 23. Petrosyan 1995: 144–155, cat. 18; James 2013). Although representations of different classes and ethnic groups are encountered earlier, for example, in ivory carvings of the Fatimid period (Contadini 2005), the wealth of visual information concerning aspects of life and human functions found in the 1237 *Maqamat* manuscript is unprecedented (see also, Tabaa, CHAPTER 12).

The question, then, is how to interpret this abundance. It is certainly plausible to suggest that it may reflect an interest, whether confined to the bourgeoisie or not, in urban life and mercantile activity. Following Ettinghausen, Grabar's conclusion, based upon the variety of scenes and personages depicted, and in particular those associated with mercantile activity in markets and caravanserais, is that the manuscripts could have been made for bourgeois patrons. Nevertheless, however persuasive and insightful the discussion, the fact remains that it is less a case of objects known to be bourgeois commissions, thereby allowing conclusions to be drawn about bourgeois taste, than of *a priori* assumptions about bourgeois concerns (as distinct from courtly ones) leading to the conclusion that such manuscripts were tailored to a bourgeois clientele.

They are nevertheless informative, through their depictions of various "types," with regard to social functions and strata. In the 1237 *Maqamat*, for example, the "men of the sword" and the bureaucratic state officials are clearly differentiated from the rest of the population. The latter includes the "men of the pen" (scribes, physicians, judges) as well as women, merchants, musicians, servants, and slaves. Women often have henna markings on their hands and light, see-through veils partially covering their faces, but they are not represented often enough for significant distinctions to be detected. Not so with men, who are clearly differentiated through vestimentary codes: officials wear *sharbush* (a particular headgear made up of fur and metal plaques), coat and boots, and often hold a spear, while judges, literary figures, musicians and merchants wear turbans, tunic and baggy trousers, and low, black shoes. Servants and slaves have a different type of clothing altogether, and are further distinguished by skin color: slaves are more scantily dressed (often having a nude torso) and although white slaves are represented, the majority have a range of darker skin colors, presumably distinguishing between those of African and Indian origin. Skin color, though, is semiologically complex, for a dark hue can also be a marker of distinction and/or non-Arab origin, being used for Indian judges, wealthy non-Arabs, and, in other manuscripts, for ancient sages such as Aristotle (Contadini 2012: 76).

There is, however, no certainty with regard to the social standing of the patron or dedicatee of the 1237 copy: the colophon gives only the name of the scribe and illuminator, Yahya al-Wasiti, and the date of completion, 634 (1237). Its imposing size (the pages measure 37 × 28 cm), large number of illustrations, and especially its outstanding quality with regard to paper, ink, calligraphy, and painting (even though many of the paintings have been retouched in subsequent periods), make it the kind of luxury object normally thought of as a princely commission, and we do indeed find, inserted within the inscription of the frieze of a mosque depicted on fol. 164v, the name of al-Mustansir (r. 1227–1242), the Abbasid caliph reigning in Baghdad when the manuscript was made. Similarly, the name of his son and successor, al-Mustaʿsim (r. 1242–1258) is found in the Süleymaniye Library copy of the same text, on the frieze of the mosque illustrated on fol. 204r (Grabar 1963: 135 and fig. 40). However, although the inscriptions provide evidence of production in or near Baghdad (Contadini 2012: 155), they are too inconspicuous to be taken as evidence of a caliphal commission. Hence the princely figure in the 1237 double frontispiece may be explained as a form of homage or, more simply, as a conventional pictorial device conferring status (Contadini 2012: 158 and col. pl. 10; Hillenbrand 2010).

Whatever the interest and patronage of merchants in this particular area of manuscript production may have been, the existence of a lively book trade for a bourgeois clientele is indisputable, with scholars and physicians as major consumers. Among the collections of books recorded in the Geniza documents the most valuable and sought after were those left by physicians. In relation to one particular library Goitein calculated, on the basis of the sale price of the items, that it may have held a thousand manuscripts (Goitein 1967–1993: vol. 4, 311). Scholars probably had a bigger role than hitherto recognized as patrons of book production, as witnessed most spectacularly by the Pseudo-Galen *Kitab al-Diryaq* (Book of Antidotes) dated 595 (1199) and most probably produced in Mosul (BnF arabe 2964. Farès 1953; Kerner 2010; Pancaroğlu 2001). It was copied by Muhammad Abu ʾl-Fath ʿAbd al-Wahid in an accomplished hand, whether in *naskh* or employing a striking and decorative form of what Déroche (1992: 132–183) has termed "New Style script" in place of the former "Eastern Kufic." Blair (2006: 151–160, fig. 6.4) calls it "broken cursive," one that would have appealed to a highly cultured audience. Furthermore, this manuscript has sumptuous illustrations with a lavish use of gold, all confirming a luxury commission, one fit for a prince; yet it was made for Abu ʾl-Fath Mahmud, "the knowledgeable imam, king of scholars (*malik al-ʿulamaʾ*)" (fol. 38r, Farès 1953: 8–9, Pl. V). The scribe, who also has the title of imam, was most probably of the same intellectual circle. It is notable that the double frontispiece represents not a prince but cosmological themes (Caiozzo 2010), including snakes that may be related to the content of the manuscript. We then have three pages in which the nine intellectual sources (or "authors") of the text are represented and identified by inscriptions. The paintings within the manuscript are varied in nature, ranging from depictions of snakes and medicinal plants to various sages discovering the effect of an antidote to scenes in which the antidotes are given to someone suffering from snakebite.

The text also gives a prompt for the depiction of "everyday activities of the peasants" (Ettinghausen 1955: 124), with workers digging up earth, in poor clothes hitched up to make their job easier, the tunic tucked into the belt, revealing legs and, occasionally, private parts. This has been taken as a democratization of imagery, the beginning of showing everyday life, and consequently to be attached to the idea of an emerging bourgeoisie. However, apart from the improbability of well-to-do city dwellers being particularly interested in rural life in the raw, the conclusion is again undermined by its failure to take account of an iconographical theme that is found elsewhere and with different meanings. A closely similar scene is represented, for example, in a Syriac manuscript (Leroy 1964: pl. 126, 3) where two men with their tunics tucked into their belts are digging in search of the True Cross, and in the 621 (1224) dispersed Dioscorides (Contadini 2012: 58 and note 12), where two figures are digging *terra sigillata*, a precious curative clay found on the island of Lemnos (Touwaide 1992–1993: vol. 4, 72–73, pl. 33).

The digging motif also appears in Western European depictions of Adam after his expulsion with Eve from the Garden of Eden, as in *The Hunterian Psalter*, England, *c.* 1170 (Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 229 (U.3.2), fol. 8r). What I call "the digging scene" thus forms part of an iconography belonging to a tradition that is found not only in Syriac and Arabic painting but also in Western European painting, and cannot in itself demonstrate a contemporary interest in rural life.

Similarly, although Ettinghausen argued that Fatimid imagery represented real life, some of that imagery, too, as in the case of wrestling, comes from a long iconographical tradition, in this particular case from late antiquity (Grube 1984, 1985). Hence, it does not necessarily reflect the particular interests of the bourgeoisie: the painter would respond to the text by calling upon a stock of inherited iconographical topoi, irrespective of the identity of the commissioner.

However, the fact that the paintings may not reveal bourgeois taste in any direct way does not imply a lack of significant bourgeois involvement in the acquisition and, probably, the commissioning of illustrated manuscripts. For a more reliable index of their interests we may turn to the nature of the texts illustrated. One representative example is the Munich *ʿAjaʾib al-Makhluqat* (Wonders of Creation), dated 678 (1280) (Berlekamp 2011; Von Bothmer 1971), copied by Muhammad ibn ʿAli al-Dimashqi, the doctor (*al-mutatabbib*) while resident in the Iraqi city of Wasit (fol. 212v), possibly for the author himself, the intellectual and polymath Zakariyya Muhammad al-Qazwini. Another example is the *c.* 1225 Ibn Bakhtishuʿ *Kitab Naʿt al-Hayawan* (Book on the Characteristics of Animals) (British Library, Or. 2784. Contadini 2012), a wonderful illustrated manuscript produced for a scholar/physician, probably, in this case, within the thriving intellectual environment of Baghdad under the Abbasid caliph al-Nasir (Figure 17.6). One of its frontispieces contains clearly Christian iconographical elements, and among the Christian community of Iraq and Syria, including doctors and more generally monasteries, we encounter ample evidence for the patronage and production of metalwork, ceramics, and gilded and enameled glass as well as manuscripts. Monastic scriptoria in Mesopotamia produced not only Syriac but also Arabic manuscripts, and it has even been suggested recently that two important illustrated lectionaries – one in the Vatican Syr. 559, the other in the British Library, Add 7170– may have been produced commercially in Mosul (Smine 2009).

However, as might be expected, most of the illustrated manuscripts of this period that lack colophons identifying patrons reveal no such connections. They cover a thematic range that may be broadly described as scientific, and demonstrate not only a concern with topics of professional relevance such as botany or pharmacology but also a lively interest in astronomy and the physical world, including flora and fauna as well as marvels. Typical examples are the 621 (1224) Dioscorides and the *c.* 1225 Ibn al-Sufi, *Risalat al-Sufi fi al-kawakib* (The Epistle of al-Sufi on the Stars) in the Riza-yi ʿAbbasi Museum in Tehran (Contadini 2006), in all probability illustrated within the same artistic circle

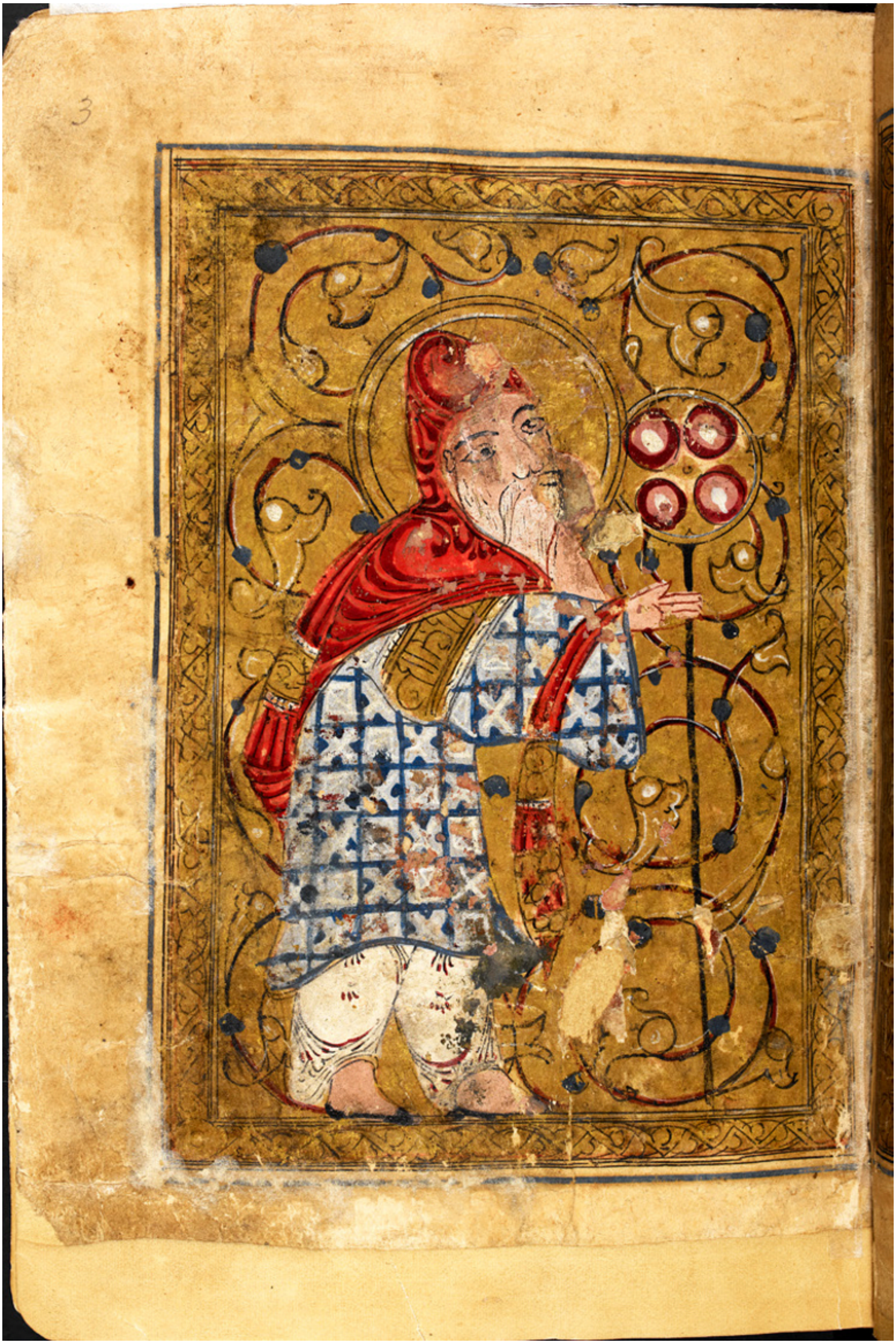

Figure 17.6 Frontispiece with a sage holding a *flabellum*. Ibn Bakhtishuʿ, *Kitab Naʿt al-Hayawan*, probably produced in Baghdad, *c.* 1225. London, British Library, Or. 2784, fol. 3r. Source: The British Library. Reproduced with permission.

as the *Kitab Naʿt al-Hayawan* mentioned above (Contadini 2012: 130–131). It may be assumed that the market for such manuscripts, whether produced commercially or commissioned, was primarily located among the scientifically inclined intelligentsia. For the wider intelligentsia, scholars of law, Qurʾanic sciences, language, and letters, it is rather a question – one which lies beyond the confines of the present chapter – of identifying the (non-illustrated) manuscripts produced not for but by them, whether copies or original works. Thereby, with the help of biographical sources, one might attempt to gain insights into their background, social position, and possibly tastes (George 2012; Hirschler 2012: esp. chapter 4).

We may assume, on the basis of the evidence we have for Baghdad and Wasit (for Baghdad, Ibn al-Athir 1851–1876: vol. 12, under al-Nasir; and for Wasit, Al-Maʿadidi 1983: esp. 110–111) that most cities around the Middle East contained a commercial area, the *suq al-warraqin*, containing paper makers, polishers, copyists, and booksellers (Bloom 2001). An illuminated copy of the *Kitab khalq al-nabi wa khulqih* (On the Characteristics of the Prophet) by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn ʿAbdallah ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz was commissioned for the library of the Ghaznavid amir ʿAbd al-Rashid, in Ghazni, around 441–444 (1050–1053) and copied by a certain Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Rafiʿ al-Warraq. His *nisba* al-Warraq suggests that he was a professional copyist and bookseller, probably working in the *suq al-warraqin* and very likely producing, alongside commissions, copies for the retail market (Contadini 2012: 160; Stern 1969).

Production could involve a complex division of labor. A scribal note on a *c.* 1200 Syriac lectionary not only tells us that the manuscript was a multiple commission but also that the scribe was in charge of the project, and that he called upon the expertise of different artists in different locations (Leroy 1964: no. XVI, especially 272–273, pls. 67–69; Snelders 2010: 175). In middle-Byzantine manuscript production, too, we may find parallels to this entrepreneurial scribe-scholar commissioning artists to work ad hoc for a specific project (Lowden 2009: chapter 3; Weyl Carr 1985: 6–7). Similarly, in Western Europe, before the rise of commercial production stimulated by the founding of universities, book production was dominated by monastic scriptoria that sometimes had laymen working for them. At the beginning of the fifteenth century we come across the case of a clerk and translator who wrote the first copy of a text, invented the visual cycle for it, coordinated the work with scribes and illuminators, and checked the copies, destined for scholars as well as royal patrons (Hedeman 2008: 23–127).

Such parallels are informative, but it has to be conceded that the economic structure of the Middle East book trade and its related modes of production are not wholly clear. We may suppose, nevertheless, that the vitality implied by the earlier evidence of the famous Baghdadi bibliophile and bibliographer Ibn al-Nadim (d. 995 or 998) in his *Fihrist* (Ibn al-Nadīm 1970) remained undimmed. The more expensive products of the market were not just for court consumption but also found customers among the bourgeoisie. More specifically, we can identify a market among well-to-do intellectuals for illustrated scientific literature, and here we may speak of bourgeois interests having a direct impact upon artistic production, just as bourgeois purchasing power must have stimulated the bazaar trade in precious objects.

In all these areas, the model of an isolated royal atelier as the specialized producer of luxury goods is difficult to sustain for the pre-Mongol period. A more realistic model is that of expert artisans having the competence and equipment to produce across the quality range, and the confidence in the market to anticipate demand, so as not to have to rely solely on commissions. Confidence in the market is shown, likewise, by the mobility of craftsmen: some were, of course, coerced by rulers to collaborate on major projects, but others moved freely. Generations of Mosul metalworkers, for example, found work in other cities (Raby 2012). Similarly, the marble and stone-carvers of Ghazni and western India, who worked for both royal and bourgeois patrons, seem to have been relatively mobile (Flood 2009: 189–226; Giunta 2003).

We thus end with an image both clear and blurred. There has been a presumption among scholars that bourgeois taste – assuming that we can speak of such a thing – was derived essentially from court models. Seen most obviously perhaps in such media as fabrics and metalwork, it resulted from an attempt to emulate, as means allowed, the known or half glimpsed models that the refinements of court luxury provided. Equally, there is an assumption that bourgeois taste was also in some way a product of the types of social interactions peculiar to urban society, and that it was reflected in a widening iconographical range sometimes inspired by the types of text that were in vogue. The first supposition is, on the face of it, reasonable, although given the poor survival rate of artifacts from the tenth and earlier centuries it is difficult to demonstrate that mercantile patronage began significantly later than that of the court. The ninth- to tenth-century ceramic finds excavated at Basra in southern Iraq, for example, already bear witness to extensive trade and, presumably, associated wealth (Fehérvári 2000: 38; Hallett 2010: 79). Further, even if we retain the paradigm of court circles determining aesthetic standards that the *nouveaux riches* would subsequently adopt, it should be recognized that this is a rather incomplete model, leaving no room for the creative role of craftsmen and artists in determining the parameters of taste. Once they are taken account of, the notion of an aesthetic divide between court circles and others begins to lose substance. As has been noted above, visual motifs may be tenacious, artists being influenced far more by their teachers than by their patrons, so that the painterly representation of a scene might tell us much more about the iconographical tradition to which it belongs than about the manner in which it was appreciated: whether at court or among the bourgeoisie, reception histories are difficult to establish.

What is clear, though, is that by spending disposable income on luxury goods it encouraged production, even from far beyond the world of Islam.

Examples of Chinese pottery (dating from the eight to *c.* fourteenth century) have been excavated at Fustat in Egypt, and the vast trading networks traced by Goitein through the Cairo Geniza documents bear ample witness to entrepreneurial activity, as do the problems of provenance posed by the myriad scattered artifacts found far from wherever they were produced. As far as acquisition is concerned, it is no doubt the case that fewer objects are inscribed with names linking them to persons outside the court than to persons within it, but this should not be interpreted as indicating that patronage was concentrated there. It is by no means the case that all the most luxurious extant items were commissioned by or for rulers, and, as the evidence of al-Urmawi quoted above underlines, the potent impulses of acquisitiveness and ostentation meant that much must have accumulated in the houses of the urban rich.

What we are left with, however, is ultimately not a problem of relative amounts. Rather, it is a case, as the title of this chapter suggests, of a degree of hesitation as to whether the idea of a bourgeoisie understood as a reasonably clearly demarcated social group with shared habits, attitudes, and aspirations should be given unquestioning assent. As the material discussed might suggest, we should instead be thinking of a number of educated urban micro societies, composed of merchants, doctors, pharmacists, judges, and so forth, with overlapping but also separate interests, and each with its own potential for patronage or consumption in specific areas and media.

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18

The Social and Economic Life of Metalwork

James W. Allan and Ruba Kana'an

One of the most distinctive features of the period between 1050 and 1250 is the fragmentation of the Abbasid central power and the emergence of a plethora of Turkic, Persian, Kurdish, and Arab dynasties that established independent courts with diverse cultural expressions and socioeconomic contexts. Taking into account this diversity, this chapter will address the social and economic life of metalwork through six objects, objects produced in a variety of places and times, and in a range of media, each of which sheds light on its own context. These objects were made for a variety of patrons and used in utilitarian, scientific, military, and court contexts, thus allowing us to have a broader understanding of the vicissitudes of metalwork production for the period.

An Astrolabe Made by Ahmad and Muhammad, Sons of Ibrahim al-Isfahani

The Museum of the History of Science at Oxford is home to an important collection of astrolabes including a dated and signed brass astrolabe that was made in Isfahan in 984 (Figure 18.1), with a later rete (pierced plate) datable to *c.* 1100 (Gunther 1976: 114–116; King 2005: 517–528; Mayer 1956: 36). The astrolabe's diameter is 132 mm. The mater (*umm*), or container, has a back plate soldered onto a cast rim that is crowned with a bracket of overlapping semicircular links. The front of the astrolabe is covered with a decorative rete (*ankabut*) with 37 dagger-shaped star pointers. The three double-sided plates inside the mater are engraved for six different latitudes ranging between 30° and 37°, including the plate for Isfahan (latitude 32°) where the astrolabe is believed to have been

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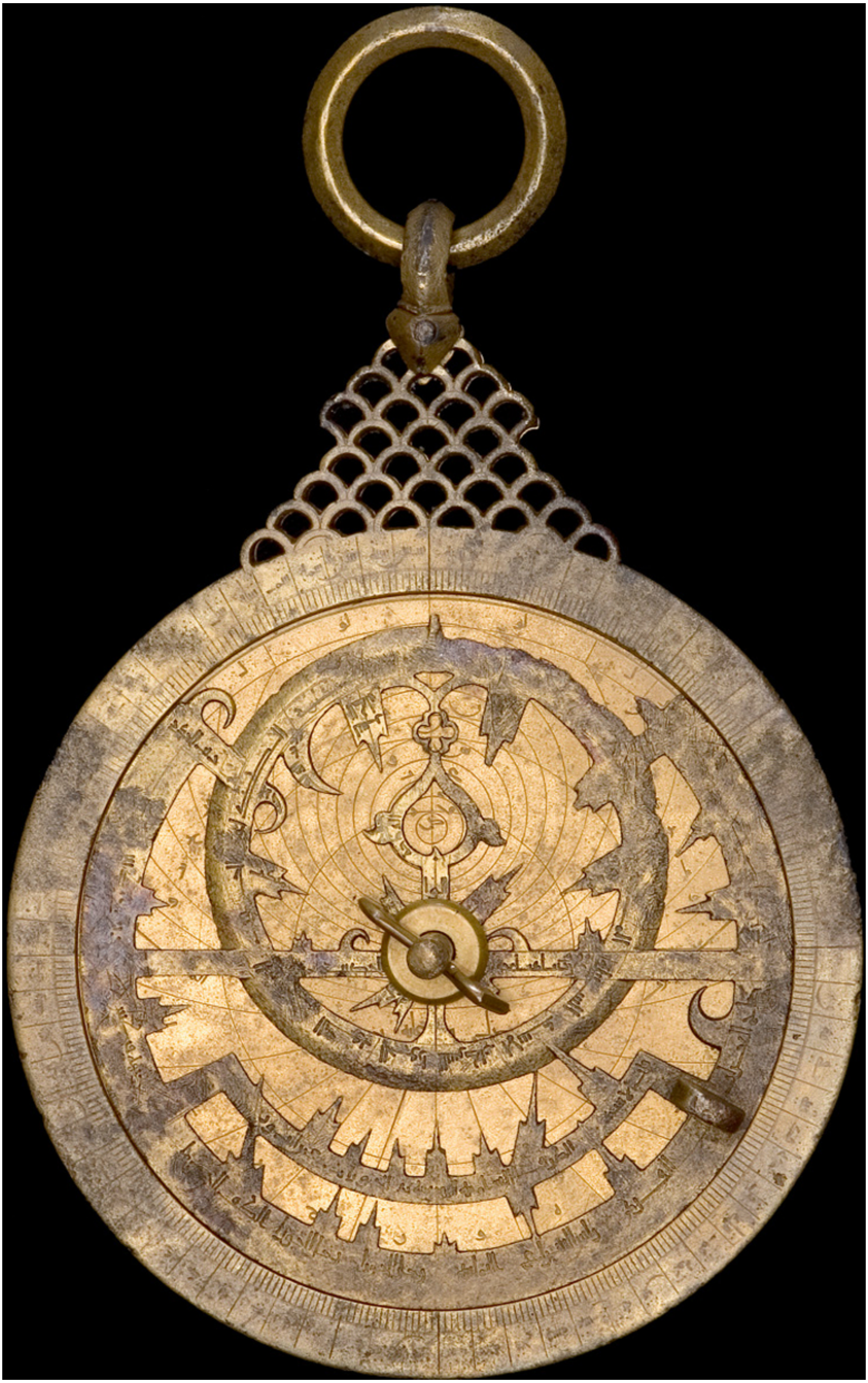

Figure 18.1 Astrolabe, brass, Isfahan, 984. Source: Museum of the History of Science, Oxford. Reproduced with permission.

made. An inscription on the back of the mater indicates that the astrolabe was "composed by" (*allafa*) the two brothers Ahmad and Muhammad the sons of Ibrahim of Isfahan.

The astrolabe's body and rete date more than 100 years apart, indicating that the practical life of this scientific instrument extended beyond the place and time of its initial manufacture. Later owners adapted their valuable possession to new knowledge, geographies, and decorative styles. In the case of this astrolabe, the star positions on the rete correspond to the year *c.* 1100 indicating the year of the replacement of the original rete. The continuous use of the astrolabe is also indicated by the gazetteer engraved on the inner side of the mater and the astrological scales on its back. The gazetteer's *naskh* inscription has the names and latitudes of 32 cities reflecting geographical knowledge from the tenth or eleventh centuries. This suggests that the development of geographical and astrological knowledge generated by the observatories of the Buyid ruler Sharaf al-Dawla (r. 982–989) in Baghdad, the star observations of the celebrated astronomer ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Sufi in Shiraz (d. 986), and the Seljuq vizier Malikshah's observatory in Isfahan *c.* 1075–1092 was known to astrolabe makers and was reflected in their work (King 2005: 528).

The aforementioned signature on the astrolabe, identifying it as the work of two Isfahani brothers, suggests that astrolabe making was a specialized craft that was transmitted in family groups or in close networks. Several astrolabists from twelfth-century Isfahan, for example, seem to belong to a single family with brothers, fathers, sons, and grandsons. Hamid ibn Mahmud al-Isfahani, who signed an astrolabe in a private collection dating to 547 (1152–1153), as well as strong boxes and combination locks (Gunther 1976: 117; Maddison 1985: 149, 152; Mayer 1956: 46), was the father of Muhammad ibn Hamid ibn Mahmud al-Isfahani. The latter signed five astrolabes including one in the Museum of Islamic Art in Istanbul, dated 556 (1160), one in the Archaeological Museum in Tehran, dated 558 (1163), and another one in Kuwait, dated 571 (1175–1176) (King 2005: 540; Mayer 1956: 67).

In addition to family networks, evidence by the tenth-century bibliographer of Abbasid Baghdad Ibn al-Nadim (d. 980–981) lists a lineage of master and apprentice (*ghulam*) astrolabe makers (King 2005: 453). One example is a group of astrolabists who operated in Iraq and Jazira between 825 and around 954. The lineage includes Khafif, the *ghulam* of ʿAli ibn Isa, for whom we have three surviving undated instruments including an astrolabe in the Museum of the History of Science at Oxford; Muhammad ibn ʿAbdallah, known as Nastulus, the *ghulam* of Khafif, whose name is on the earliest surviving dated astrolabe (927–928) now in Kuwait, and various apprentices of Nastulus including a female astrolabist based in the court of the Hamadanid ruler of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawla (r. 916–967). Mathematical and astronomical treatises of the period mention that some of the apprentices surpassed the knowledge, craftsmanship, and achievements of their masters.

The most typical signature on scientific instruments including astrolabes is *sanaʿahu* (made by). The inscription on the astrolabe signed by the two Isfahani brothers, however, refers to their work as "composing" (*allafa*) implying that their role was not that of a metalwork craftsman but also (or instead) a role of intellectual nature perhaps including mathematical and astronomical knowledge. The making of an astrolabe brings together two highly specialized crafts that require different skills and training: the metalworking techniques including casting, sheet cutting, and engraving, and the theoretical astronomical and mathematical knowledge. Some astrolabes have several signed names indicating a division of labor. For example, three individuals signed the astrolabe made in Damascus in 1222–1223 for the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Muʿazzam Sharaf al-Din (d. 1227). It was made by ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Sinan al-Baʿlbaki al-Najjar, calculated by ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr the *muqawwit* (time keeper) of Tabriz, and inlaid by al-Siraj al-Dimashqi (Maddison 1992: 352). The survival of various detailed manuals on the making of astronomical instruments suggests the possibility that astrolabes were also made by craftsmen. This is confirmed by the seventeenth-century traveler and jeweler Jean Chardin, who observed that in Safavid Iran the astrolabes made by the astronomers themselves were much more valued than those made by metalwork craftsmen (Maddison and Savage-Smith 1997: 189). Whether Muhammad ibn Khutlukh of Damascus was an astronomer or just a metalworking craftsman is difficult to decide: his divination table at the British Museum, dated to 1241–1242, suggests by its nature and the form of the piece used to suspend the instrument (*kursi*) that he was also an astrolabist, while his incense burner (Allan 1986a: no. 1) shows that he also made utilitarian, if individualistic, metal objects. Early evidence of the perceived values of astrolabes comes from the tenth-century *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwan al-Safa*ʾ), who mention that a piece of copper turned into an astrolabe is 20 times more valuable than the worth of its weight (Maddison and Savage-Smith 1997: 186).

Charting the changes in the locations of the sun and stars in the sky is one of the various continuities in the transmission of knowledge from pre-Islamic Hellenistic and Indian traditions. Whereas astrology formed the main pre-Islamic function of an astrolabe, its predominant function under Muslims was to determine the direction of the qibla and the times of prayer. This is reflected in the signatures on several astrolabes including names such as *muwaqqit* or *miqati*, an epithet for a person whose task is determining the prayer time (Charette 2003). Treatises on astrolabes and other astronomical instruments are part of a traditional approach to practical science that was developed in close relationship with religious institutions of learning. The earliest substantial description of the astrolabe in Arabic, known as *al-Kamil*, was written by the Abbasid astronomer Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Kathir al-Farghani around 856–857 (Lorch 2005). This was followed by various scientific treatises including al-Sufi's (d. 986) *The Book of the Use of the Astrolabe*, al-Biruni's treatise on astrolabe making (d. 1050), and a treatise written by Abu ʾl-Qasim Ahmad ibn ʿAbdallah ibn ʿUmar (ibn al-Saffar) (d. 1034) (Maddison and Savage-Smith 1997: 195). This suggests that by the time the brothers Ahmad and Muhammad of Isfahan made their astrolabe, the necessary mathematical and geographical knowledge was readily available in the various centers of learning in the Muslim world in the form of multiple manuscripts and practical examples, mainly from Harran, Iran, Syria, and Spain, some of which survive in museum and private collections and some of which are known to us only through the historical record.

Serçe Limanı Box from the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology

The completely undecorated Serçe Limanı box (Figure 18.2) was a purely utilitarian item and comes from an underwater archaeological site – a ship carrying a cargo of glass cullet, which was wrecked in 1025, or shortly after that, and now lies on the sea bed in Serçe Limanı, not far from Bodrum in southwest Turkey (Bass *et al.* 2004; see Redford and Hoffman, CHAPTER 16).

The sailors had various personal metal items with them: three copper cauldrons, three copper buckets, a cylindrical brass box, a tinned copper pitcher, a pestle, and two small bottles. The cauldrons were evidently for cooking and belonged to the ship's galley. The pitcher, being tinned, was for drinking water. However, whether the buckets were for ablutions or were generally to hold water is unclear. A possible use for the bottles is as rose-water sprinklers. Judging by the trousseau lists, which have survived in the Cairo Geniza documents, recording life in the Jewish community of Cairo in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the box was probably intended to hold the pulverized ash of alkaloid plants (*ushnan*). Whereas soap was at that period used for washing clothes, soda ash was used for washing the hands and other parts of the body, and a round, cylindrical brass box with hinged lid would make a suitable watertight container for such a substance – though it has to be said that no scoop was found with which to spoon out the ash.

The box, which stands 6.5 cm high with a diameter of 9.4 cm, is made of sheet brass and is of very low quality, though practical, metalwork. It illustrates the fact that copper and brass were used not only, when inlaid, for very expensive objects, which might be commissioned by members of the court, but also, when undecorated, as items available to the less well off in society to meet their everyday needs.

This box is important in terms of trade, for its lead isotope analysis could point to Sardinia as the source of the lead (Bass *et al.* 2004: 354–359; al-Saaʾd 2000), and hence to the transport of metals around the Mediterranean in early Islamic times. Trade had for centuries been trans-Mediterranean and objects were distributed accordingly. Thus, for example, in early Islamic times a group of jugs with pear-shaped or globular bodies, thin necks with an annular ring, and an unusual form of handle, found in Egypt, Sicily, Lebanon, Mallorca, and Spain, illustrate the movement of metal objects around the shores of the Mediterranean. They most likely derive from Alexandria, with its great foundry tradition. Other objects,

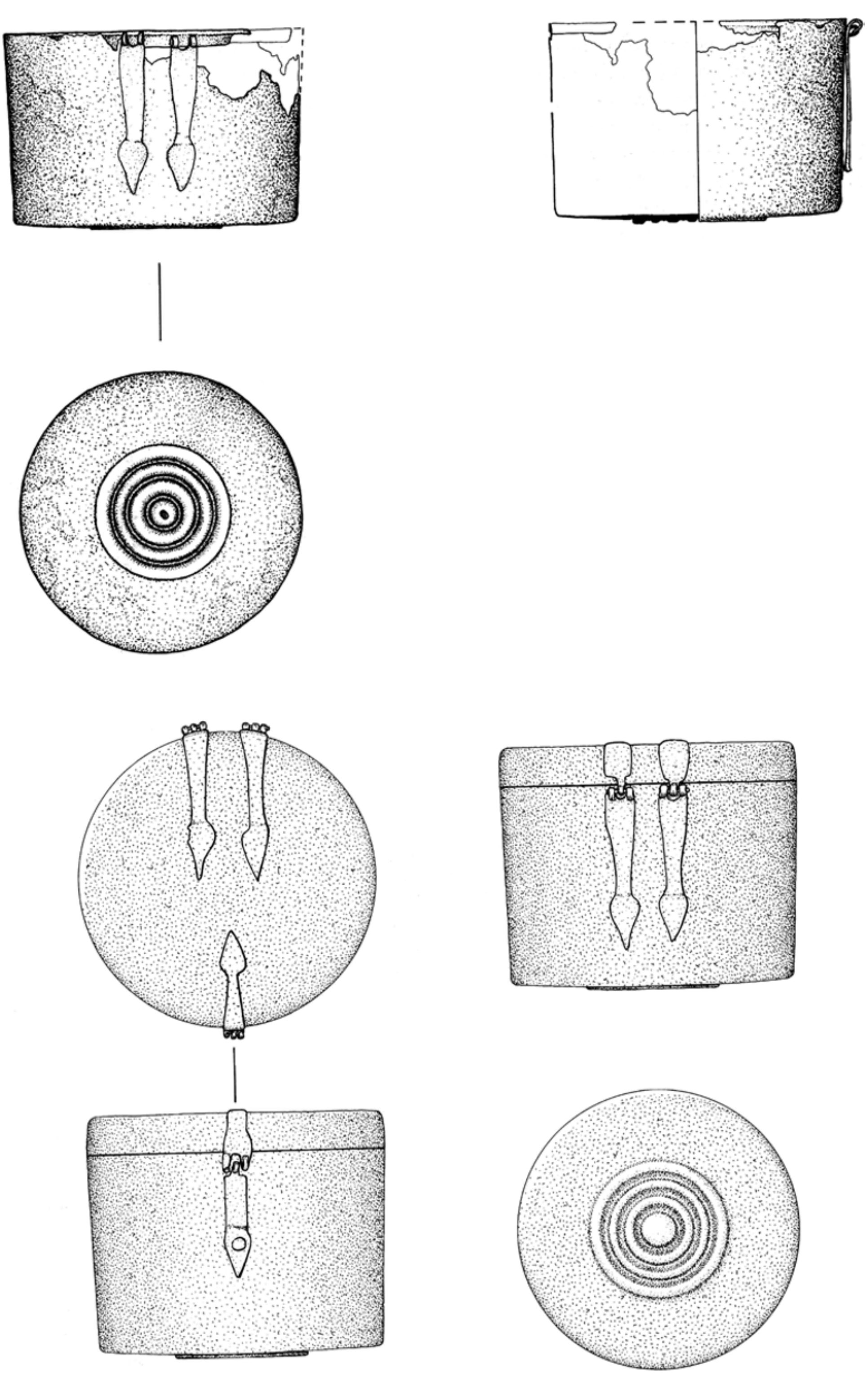

FIGURE 18.2 Box, brass, east Mediterranean, eleventh century, from the Serçe Limanı shipwreck. Source: Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology. Reproduced with permission.

which were not identical, but relate to each other through shape and/or function, were probably made in different centers, for example, a style of three-legged, cylindrical or hexagonal incense-burner, found in Volubilis (Morocco), Gerona (Spain), Crikvine (Dalmatia), and Amman (Jordan) (Allan 1986b: 16–24).

The role of trade is also seen in three important hoards of eleventh-century metalwork, those of Tiberias, Caesarea (both in Israel), and Denia (southeast Spain). Tiberias was clearly a center of the metalworking industry at this period, since the Tiberias hoard, numbering about 1000 vessels, and, according to the coins found with it, dating from round about 1078, had been packed into jars on and under the floor of what must have been a coppersmith's workshop (Khamis 2012, 2013). The Caesarea hoard was hidden off a well shaft and must have belonged to the owner of a building above (Lester 2012). The Denia hoard (Azuar Ruíz 2012) was recorded as being found in a large glazed ceramic jar and must have been part of a cargo of goods imported from the Levant.

The Serçe Limanı ship carried Fatimid glass, probably made in Tyre or Sidon in the Levant, together with unglazed jugs with filters, similar to examples from Fustat in Egypt, and a bucket typical in form and design of Fatimid products. These objects and other evidence suggest that the ship was trading between the Black Sea and the Levantine coast. The Geniza documents emphasize such a localized Levantine trade in metal objects, for they mention copper and brass buckets being imported into Fustat from Damascus, and other places in Syria and Lebanon, and other items from further afield, for example, from Baghdad (Goitein 1999: vol. 4, 135, 140).

However, the Geniza documents bring out two additional features about the trade in metalwork. First is the importance of Spain. This is confirmed by the mention of Spanish metal objects in a trousseau list of *c.* 1140 and a dowry of 1156 (Goitein 1999: vol. 4, 324, 331). In addition there is a list of the personal belongings of a coppersmith who evidently himself came from Spain (Goitein 1999: vol. 4, 338–339). There was also a strong west-to-east emphasis in the Mediterranean trade in metals. For example, Nahray bin Nissim, a wholesale merchant trading *c.* 1045–1096, brought copper, iron, lead, mercury, tin, silver ingots, all from west to east (Goitein 1999: vol. 14, 153–154). Self-sufficient in both precious and base metals, Spain was the most important source of mercury for the western and central Islamic lands. It also had a rich Visigothic metalworking tradition, and metalworking in Umayyad Spain is confirmed by textual references, for example, Ibn Saʿid (d. 1286), who says that Spain was particularly famous for the manufacture of armor and weapons, and that brass and iron objects were regularly exported from Spain to North Africa, and al-Idrisi, who notes Almeria as producing copper and iron utensils under the Almoravids (1056–1147). Astrolabes provide further indications of metalworking centers: Toledo, Valencia, Saragossa, and Guadalajara in the eleventh century, and Seville in the early thirteenth (Mayer 1956).

The second feature is the role of India. Here a Geniza order sent from Aden to the west coast of India is worth quoting in full:

> Make me a nice lamp from the rest of all the copper (*sufr*). Its column should be octagonal and stout, its base should be in the form of a lampstand with strong feet. On its head there should be a copper (*nuhas*) lamp with two ends for two wicks, which should be set on the end of the column so that it can move up and down. The three parts, the column, the stand, and the lamp, should be separate from one another. If they can make the feet in spirals, then let it be so; for this is more beautiful. The late Abu'l-Faraj al-Jubayli made a lamp of such a description. Perhaps this will be like that one. (Goitein 1999: vol. 4, 134–135)

Artifactual evidence of an Indian trade link with the Mediterranean is provided by a sword hilt found in the Serçe Limanı ship, which, with its *hamsa* (celestial swan) figures, must come from India (Bass *et al.* 2004: figs. 21.15, 21.16).

One might wonder what, if anything, was produced in Fustat. In fact, a variety of different metalworking craftsmen are mentioned in the Geniza documents. Moreover, there was evidently an export trade in silver goods, including silver trays for export to Tunisia and to Aden, small silver dessert bowls, and silver washbasins and other silver gilded and nielloed vessels, which were exported to India (Goitein 1999: vol. 1, 108–109, 420–421; vol. 4, 139, 145–146).

The Serçe Limanı box is thus a fascinating piece, telling us about the social customs of the time, and also acting as a stepping-stone for understanding more about the trade in metals and metal objects in the Mediterranean world and beyond.

Seljuq Sabre Blade from the Furusiyya Collection

Our knowledge of early Islamic iron and steel weapons comes from two particular sources, an *Epistle on Swords* written by the philosopher al-Kindi for the Abbasid caliph al-Muʿtasim (r. 833–842) and a chapter in a *Lapidary* by the great scientist and historian, al-Biruni, written probably during the reign of the Ghaznavid sultan Mawdud (r. 1041–1050), whose capital was Ghazni in modern Afghanistan (Hoyland and Gilmour 2012). Both these texts are essentially eastward-looking, especially al-Kindi's. And rightly so, for the origin of the crucible steel which was so important for the manufacture of swords was almost certainly Sri Lanka (Juleff 1998), even though Yemen was evidently an important center of crucible steel and sword manufacture in al-Kindi's time. The technology seems to have reached Khurasan in early Islamic times, for archaeological evidence of crucible steel has been found at both Merv (Lang, Craddock, and Simpson 1998) and Akhsikath (Papakhristu and Rehren 2000). It also seems to have been transferred westwards, for in the twelfth century the Geniza documents mention eggs (*bayd*), almost certainly of crucible steel, being carried from India to Aden (Goitein and Friedman 2008: 369–370), and al-Tarsusi, writing a treatise on arms and armor for Saladin, was acquainted with crucible steel and able to offer recipes for its manufacture (Cahen 1948). Still further west, crucible steel was known and used in Islamic Spain at least from the tenth century, and indigenous production took place in Seville and Ceuta in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries (Dinnetz 2001a: 78–79).

The curved sword blade illustrated in Figure 18.3 is single-edged, and is the only surviving example so far known of a Seljuq saber (Mohamed 2007: no.9). The saber is a cavalry sword with a slightly curved blade and hilt, ideal for slashing. This type of sword was probably introduced from Central Asia in the ninth or tenth century, and a sword excavated at Nishapur in 1940 may be an early example of the type. Literary evidence suggests that the saber, known then as a *qarajuliyya*, or *qalachuri*, was particularly popular with the Ghaznavids, who ruled eastern Iran and Afghanistan, and that it may have spread westwards during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Allan 1979: 90). However, it was not popularized in the Levant and Egypt until the early Mamluk period, and soldiers in the rest of the Islamic Mediterranean continued to use the straight swords traditional to the area. The Furusiyya Collection Seljuq sword blade has been the subject of metallurgical examination: it is of crucible steel and would originally have displayed a watered pattern. However, watering typical of crucible steel has yet to be found on any straight sword of Mediterranean Islamic origin.

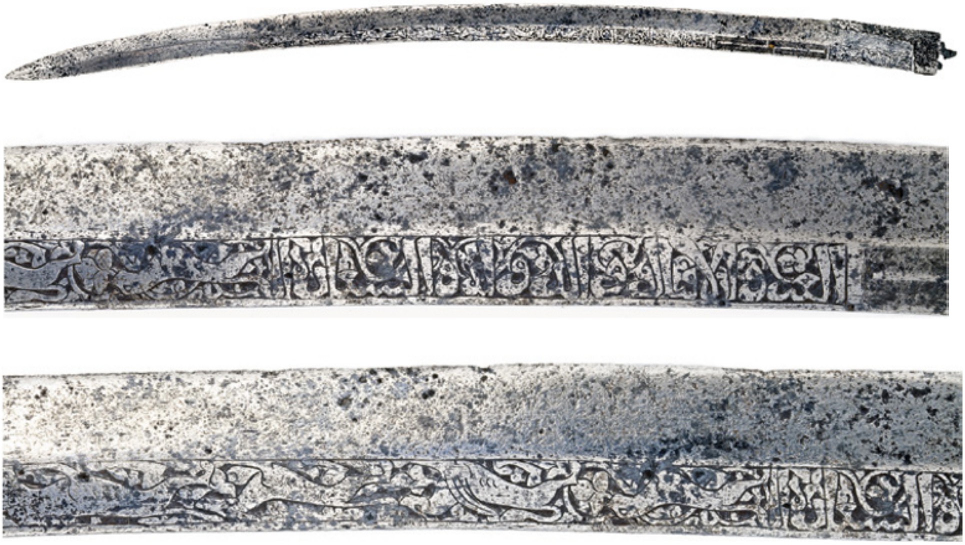

Figure 18.3 Saber blade, steel, Iran, eleventh–twelfth century, length 75.4 cm. Source: Furusiyya Collection Inv. R-249. Reproduced with permission.

Iron, which is essential to the production of steel, would have been a major item of trade in early Islamic times. Dynasties focused on Central Asia or Afghanistan had abundant supplies in the heart of their empires, as numerous mentions of Ghur in the literature as a source of arms show: plentiful supplies of iron and steel meant power. The same was true of the Umayyads of Spain and their successors, who controlled extensive sources of iron (Dinnetz 2001b: 47–52). But the Abbasid caliphs, with their capital at Baghdad, would have been totally dependent on imported iron for their military equipment, the nearest sources being Fars and the Caspian provinces of Iran. And further west, the Fatimids and Ayyubids, centered on Egypt with their capital in Cairo, depended on imports too. For these al-Tarsusi mentions Rum (i.e., Byzantium, Anatolia), the Maghrib (Bougie in modern Algeria), and al-Andalus (Seville) as sources of iron, as well as China and India, presumably in the latter cases via the Red Sea (Cahen 1948: 127). Because relatively little iron was used in home situations, the Geniza documents rarely mention this metal, so our knowledge of the details of the trade is much more scanty than for copper and brass. Moreover, some of this trade at least would have been clandestine, since the Byzantines and other Christian powers would not have been keen to sell iron or weapons to their Muslim enemies, witness the Venetian decision to end selling arms to the "Saracens" in 971 (Dinnetz 2001b: 68). On the other hand, Pisa seems to have been a major exporter in the second half of the twelfth century (Dinnetz 2001b: 69–70), so, as is often the case in human history, profit motives triumphed over the needs of politics.

The inscription of good wishes (might, good fortune, good luck, blessing) on the saber blade, and the inscribed row of real or mythical animals chasing each other, which includes hounds, a hare, and a winged lion, point to the close relationship between steelworkers and other craftsmen. In terms of technology, steelworkers were highly specialized, but the decoration used for this saber was of a type common throughout the arts, from manuscript illustrations to ceramics. If the steelworkers located their industrial area outside their town, as was the case in Merv in eastern Iran, then they would certainly have had access to other craft industries, like that of the coppersmiths, located in the town bazaar. Indeed one suspects that this blade would have left the smith's furnace in a finished, but undecorated, form, and then been carried to the metalworkers in the bazaar, where it would have been decorated and offered for sale.

Zebu and Calf Aquamanile from the Hermitage Museum

Our fourth piece of metalwork is an unusual object, but one which proves extremely informative (Dyakonov 1939; Ettinghausen 2007; Giuzalian 1968). Three-dimensional metal sculptures, though attested in the literature, are rare survivals in the medieval Islamic world, the most notable examples being the lion fountain spouts and the roaring beasts of the Mediterranean, which seem to have

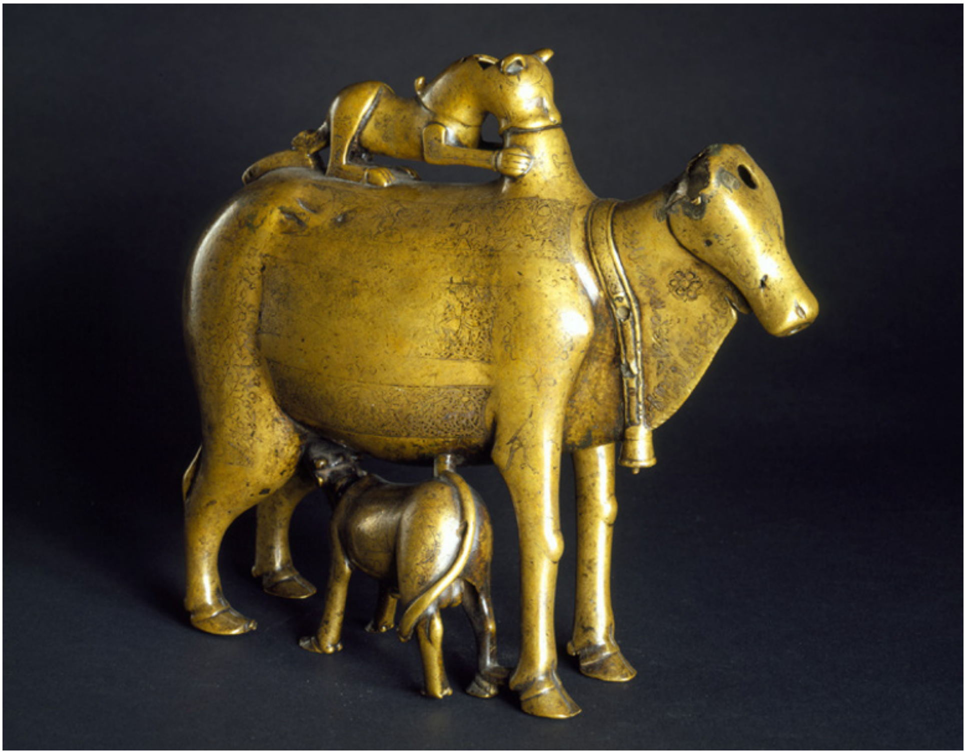

Figure 18.4 Zebu and calf aquamanile, cast from a quaternary alloy, inlaid with silver, probably made in Herat, Afghanistan, 1206, height 35 cm. Source: Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Reproduced with permission.

been popular between the tenth and thirteenth centuries (Contadini, Camber, and Northover 2002). The example shown in Figure 18.4, an aquamanile in the form of a zebu being suckled by its calf, with a lion handle, reminds us that whatever the religious theorists had to say about the use of figural art, it was widely used and enjoyed in the Islamic world, by Muslims as much as by Christians. In this instance, the faiths of the caster and owner are uncertain, since they used traditional Persian names, Ruzbeh ibn Afridun ibn Barzin and Shah Barzin ibn Afridun ibn Barzin. However, the decorator ʿAli ibn Muhammad ibn Abiʾl-Qasim must certainly have been a Muslim. It should also be noted that a later owner of the vessel was concerned enough about the issue of figural imagery to cut the throat of the zebu just below its head, thereby presumably rendering it "dead." This approach can also be found in manuscripts (Ettinghausen 1962: 106–111).

The zebu has a collar with a bell round its neck, and as Ettinghausen (2007) has shown, originally wore a harness, and possibly a bridle, both of which could have been moved by rods attached to the hinged tail, while the bell would have rung by the shaking of the vessel as water was poured from it. In other words, this is an early Islamic automaton. It is also an object with a very specific symbolism, which illustrates its social context in the Iran of the thirteenth century. For the vessel may be interpreted as a play on the name of the owner, Afridun, or Faridun, who shared the name of a royal protagonist of the Book of Kings (*Shahnama*), the great Iranian epic: "Through all the centuries, all Iranians, young and old, have known the story of the famed king Feridun, and his ascent from small beginnings as a cattle breeder to the loftiest station in the realm as its king and benign ruler" (Ettinghausen 2007: 141). The young lion cub sucking on the hump of the cow represents the young Feridun nurtured on successful cattle breeding, shown in the well-fed cow with its male calf, while Feridun's kingship is represented by the inlaid decoration – the courtly entertainments of jugglers, dancers, and musicians, and the courtly pursuit of hunting. The sphinxes on the calf symbolize Feridun's magical superiority and strength, the good luck wishes are for his good fortune (and that of the vessel's owner), and the game of backgammon, shown on the cow's flank, symbolizes the planning and strategy which have led to Feridun's success.

The form of the object and its inscription tells us a little about artisanal society of the day. First we notice the quality of the casting. The main inscription, written on the withers and the front part of the neck of the cow, reads, "This cow and calf and lion were all cast at the same time with the help of God, the all-just judge and the nourisher, by the labour of Ruzbeh b. Afridun b. Barzin. Prosperity to its owner, Shah Barzin ibn Afridun ibn Barzin. Made by ʿAli ibn Muhammad ibn Abiʾl-Qasim, the decorator." Hence, the aquamanile must have been made as a complete unit, using the lost wax process, and from that we can be certain that the caster must have been very experienced in the craft. This was not a one off: behind it must have been a long tradition of casting. Given the Buddhist background to this area of the Islamic world, one might speculate that the artisan had inherited his skills, over however many generations, from the casters of Buddhist images (Allan 1982: 12–13). Incidentally, the casting technique is visible at various places on the aquamanile in the form of a sunk plug, most obviously on the halter (Allan 1979: pl.2d).

Then we notice that the lion handle is of a quite different sculptural quality to the naturalistic form of the zebu, and Giuzalian (1968) has proposed a woodcarving tradition as its source. This in its turn suggests that the artisans in any bazaar or industrial area inside (or outside) a city might share ideas, borrow forms, or otherwise cooperate in creating their works of art. That is made all the more likely by the contents of the inscription, which tells us that the caster of the piece was not the same man as the decorator. So the piece was probably made in a metal casting workshop, and then transferred down the alley to an inlayer's workshop for its decoration. This is also indicated by the inscription on the celebrated Bobrinski bucket, made in Herat in 1163 (Ettinghausen 1943; The Arts of Islam 1976: no. 180; Kana'an 2009; see also Contadini, CHAPTER 17). Moreover, the inlayer was using designs that are based on a tradition suitable for illustrated as well as illuminated manuscripts. Even though no early manuscripts of this sort have survived from eastern Iran or Afghanistan, literary evidence tells us that they existed (Arnold 1928;

Allan 1994; Flood 2011), and surviving ceramic fragments support that claim. Again, the bazaar is revealed as a place of artistic exchange.

The inscriptions are also of interest. For the inlayer here has included a fluent, cursive inscription giving the names of all three individuals, and though he might have put his own name on objects, it is very unlikely that he often had the chance of inlaying the name of the owner-to-be, Shah Barzin. Hence, his work was not simply copying from some set of designs (including calligraphic ones) that he used every week: it is likely that he was literate, and that he had calligraphic as well as inlaying skills. Moreover, the inscription uses both Arabic and Persian. Most of it is in Persian, but it also includes the Arabic phrase *barakat li-sahibihi*, "blessing to its owner." At the end of the inscription the word for "the decorator" includes the Arabic definite article, *al-naqqash*. Arabic was introduced into Iran through the Islamic conquests in the seventh century, but the ninth and tenth centuries saw a revival of Persian literature and culture, hence the bilingual mixture on this object.

Ettinghausen (2007) has linked the inlaid designs on the zebu to Persian courtly life. But they recur on other objects of the area at this period, for example, on the Bobrinski bucket, made a generation earlier in Herat, and they could equally well have depicted the life of the owner of the vessel. As well as the sphinx mentioned earlier, acting as a symbol of good luck, an astrological theme is to be seen – in the seven-petal rosette on either side of the neck of the zebu, which is a shorthand for illustrating the sun in a central roundel, with the other six planets in roundels around it (Allan 1982). Images of everyday life are thus juxtaposed with astrological ones to remind us of the different layers of life enjoyed by medieval patrons and artisans. A further element is the way the decoration of the aquamanile suggests the idea of an animal being dressed, emphasizing the important role of textiles in medieval society, or, as one scholar has put it, "the draped universe of Islam" (Golombek 1988).

However, the religious and economic significance of the aquamanile remain obscure. On either side of the cow's muzzle is an inscription which gives the date as *bi ta'rikh-i muharram*, "in the month of Muharram," plus the year 603 (1206). Muharram is the Islamic holy month, and the Bobrinski bucket is also dated to the month of Muharram, though in that case the year is 559 (1163). Moreover, numerous ceramic vessels also bear dates relating them to the holy month (in whatever year they were made) (Bagherzadeh 1989; Watson 1994). We can assume that many of them were gifts, as is clear in this instance from the inscription on the zebu's neck, but the precise significance of the object as a gift remains uncertain. There are unanswered questions too concerning its monetary value. How much did it cost? How was it valued by Ruzbeh, and how significant was its monetary value to Shah Barzin? What percentage of the theoretical cost would have paid for 'Ali's work? To such questions we unfortunately have no answers. All we can perhaps say is that, if the idea that inlaid metalwork was a substitute for silver is valid (Allan 1977), then these types of object were at the top end of the market – as the quality of casting and inlay of this piece would in any case suggest. The way the object and its inlaid decoration have been extensively rubbed also suggests that this was a much-valued possession, one which was used regularly, polished, and shown off to guests by its owner as a prized automaton.

The Freer Pen Box Made by Shazi/Shadhi the *Naqqash* in 1210

The rectangular pen box with semicircular endings shown in Figure 18.5 is one of the earliest signed and dated brass pen boxes surviving from the pre-Mongol period. It is superbly cast from a brass alloy and inlaid with silver and copper calligraphic inscriptions, floral arabesques, and animal friezes. The pen box has a long inscription stating that it was made for the grand vizier of the last Khwarazmshahs in 607 (1210) (Atıl, Case, and Jett 1985; Herzfeld 1936; Melikian-Chirvani 1986).

The decorative composition of the pen box is typical of objects from Khurasan dating from between the middle of the twelfth century and the Mongol invasion in the first quarter of the thirteenth. Floral scrolls appear on the pen box in different forms ranging from a background for the *naskh* inscription and animal frieze on the sides of the box, to the principal decorative composition on the pen box's lid and the undulating vine on the bottom of the base. The main design on the lid comprises two mirror image scrolls inhabited by animals including ducks, hares, foxes, and bulls. Inhabited scrolls are known from earlier metalwork including the eighth-century Marwan ewer in Cairo, and are evidence of the longevity of motifs and the persistence of pre-Islamic themes on Islamic metalwork. The same design of the mirror image scroll is found on another pen box that was found in Herat signed by Shazi (Melikian-Chirvani 1982: 69–72). The two animal friezes on the side of the lids on the Freer pen box also indicate a mirror image application of a design motif where mythical animals and other quadrupeds are mirrored on either side of the hinges, suggesting the use of stencils to copy and apply designs.

Similar to the zebu and calf aquamanile discussed above, the Freer pen box was cast out of metal alloy, but here in two pieces using a different method of casting and revealing additional technical aspects of metalworking in Khurasan. Each of the two parts was cast in an open mold, requiring a great skill to achieve the thin

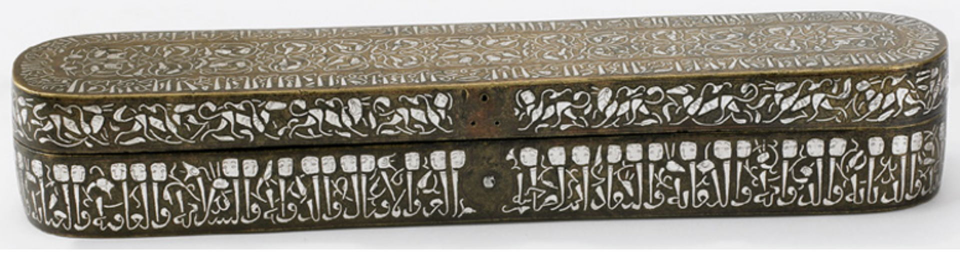

FIGURE 18.5 Pen box, cast brass, inlaid with silver, Iran or Afghanistan, 1210. Source: The Freer Gallery of Art (36.7). Reproduced with permission.

walls and the same curvature of the rounded ends. The fact that the artist chose to cast the pen box rather than using sheet metal that is hammered and raised, by then common in the region, allowed for a superbly clean finish. Sheet metal pen boxes of the same shape are known from the middle of the twelfth century and so is the lost wax casting method used for a pen box now in the Hermitage dated to 1148 (Giuzalian 1968). This suggests that shape/form was not the only factor in deciding the metalworking technique and that the twelfth- and thirteenth-century metalworkers of Khurasan were creative and experimental in the decades that witnessed the efflorescence of high quality inlaid metalwork. The Freer's technical analysis of the pen box (Atıl, Chase, and Jett 1985: 107–110) further demonstrates that the metalworkers used an advanced method of casting by placing small pieces of pure copper in the open mold that allowed for the rapid solidification of the molten metal during the casting process.

The Freer pen box has multiple inscriptions that combine names, dates, and blessings. The placement of the vizier Majd al-Mulk's name in an elaborate frieze on the top of the lid and the lengthy honorifics eulogizing him leave us in no doubt that the pen box was made specifically for him. What the inscription does not confirm, however, is whether he ordered the box or whether someone else ordered it for him, perhaps as a gift. This ambiguity regarding the role of a person of influence whose name is inscribed on an object, and whether he had any responsibility for its design or inscriptions is evident from the lengthy inscription on the rim of the Bobrinski bucket and the zebu and calf aquamanile mentioned above (Kana'an 2009). There is no ambiguity, on the other hand, in the identity of the decorator as Shazi signs his name and dates his work on the side of the lid. On another signed flask, Shazi adds the *nisba* al-Harawi (from Herat) to his signature. What is typical for this period is that the rise of the number of craftsmen signing their works goes hand in hand with the rise of the number of surviving objects with named patrons (Mayer 1959). Whether this is an accident of survival or a phenomenon of a socioeconomic context needs to be further explored (see Contadini, CHAPTER 17).

Also typical of other Khurasan brasses is the variety of calligraphic styles used on the pen box including a simple *naskh* on the lid, and two forms of animated script: an animated Kufic ending with birds' heads used for signing Shazi's name on the side of the lid, and an elaborate *naskh* with human-headed uprights on the body. The use of the animated script, also known as anthropomorphic or zoomorphic script, started in Khurasan and although the style was transferred westwards to Jazira, its use remained predominantly limited to metalwork (Grohmann 1955–1956).

By the time the Freer pen box was made in 1210, pen boxes and inkwells were a common symbol of the administrative and learned classes in both literary and visual sources. A pen case with rounded ends, similar to the one discussed here, is depicted in association with the Nine Sages of Antiquity in a copy of the *Kitab al-diryaq* (Book of Antidotes) produced probably in northern Iraq in 1199, now in the

Bibliothèque nationale de France (MS. arab. 2964, fols 5v–r; Pancaroğlu 2001: 158, fig. 2a-c). Art historians have proposed two interpretations for the patronage of pen cases and inkwells for the period. First, Melikian-Chirvani, following the thirteenth-century historian of Mosul Ibn al-Athir and the fourteenth-century lexicographer Nakhjavani, identifies what he calls the "state inkwells" that were part of the insignia of the grand vizier, and as such sees the Freer pen box, among others, as a royal commission, perhaps on the occasion of the appointment of Majd al-Mulk to his vizierial post (Melikian-Chirvani 1986: 76). Second, Taragan, following Ettinghausen, identifies a fashion for inkwells among scribes and skilled bureaucrats including a group of cylindrical inkwells from the Seljuq period with carved and inlaid representations of scribes, inkwells, and reed pens including the Seljuq inkwell now at the Royal Ontario Museum (Taragan 2005). The person named on the Freer pen box, identified by Herzfeld as the grand vizier Majd al-Mulk al-Muzaffar, was the founder of the library of Merv before its destruction by the Mongols, thus combining the high official rank and the link to learning and literacy.

Surviving evidence for cast inkwells (*dawat*) goes back to the eleventh century (Allan 1982: 44) with the cylindrical inkwell surmounted by a cast-domed lid becoming already common in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The earliest surviving inlaid pen box dates to 1148 (Giuzulian 1968) with an inscription extolling the virtues of both the pen and the inkwell. The crude form and experimental decoration quickly gave way to finely cast wedge-shaped examples with elegant decoration such as the portable pen box decorated by Shazi, the same decorator of the Freer pen box, now in a private collection (Melikian-Chirvani, 1982: 69–72). The fact that the decorator of the Freer pen box was responsible for decorating two types of pen boxes, the wedge shape that can be hung from a belt and the rectangular type with semi-circular endings, suggest that by the early thirteenth century patrons had the ability to chose between existing types of pen box that were readily available in the bazaar.

A Silver-Inlaid Tray Made for Badr al-Din Luʾluʾ in Thirteenth-Century Mosul

The magnificent silver-inlaid tray shown in Figure 18.6 is 61.5 cm in diameter and 7 cm in height with a long eulogy on the rim bearing the name and titles of Badr al-Din Luʾluʾ: the *atabeg* who ruled Mosul under the Zangids from 1218 to 1233 and later usurped power and ruled under the title of al-Malik al-Rahim until his demise in 1259.

The tray is one of the most elaborately inlaid brasses of the first half of the thirteenth century, with an overall concentric composition. It comprises two pictorial friezes alternating with a long interlaced Kufic inscription and two narrow friezes of vine scrolls surrounding a central medallion. The composition at the center of the tray has a row of winged quadrupeds marching in file with raised paws around

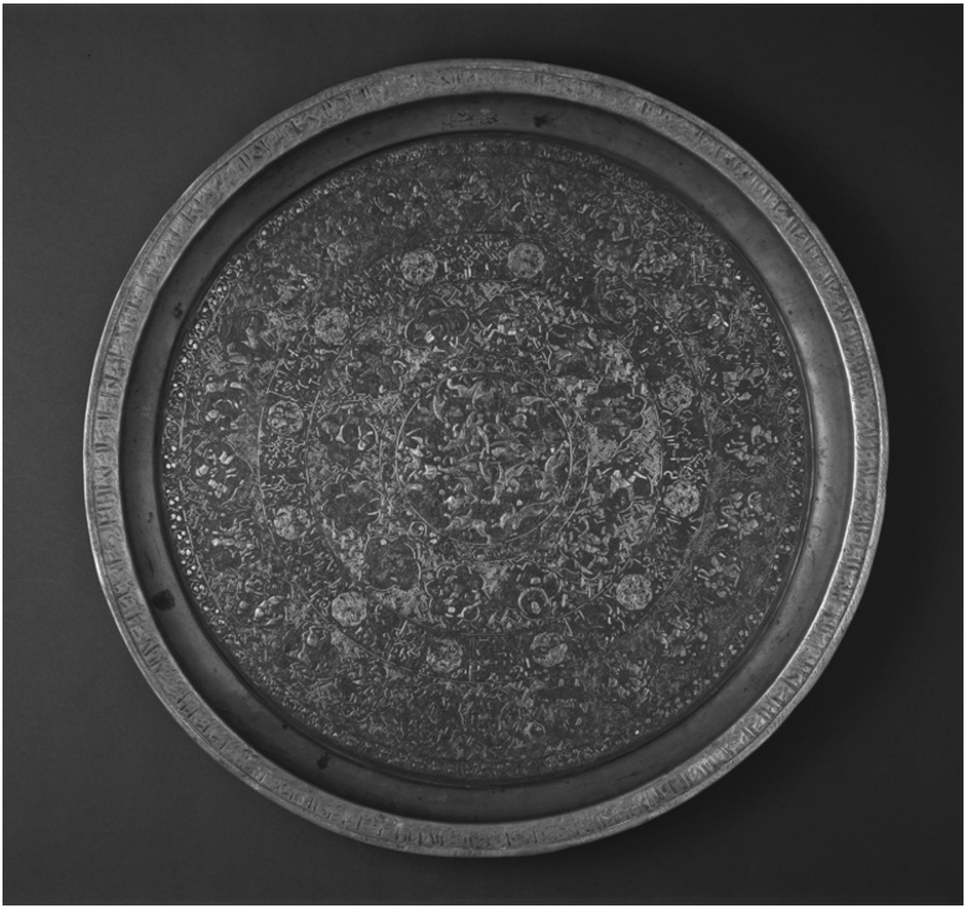

FIGURE 18.6 Tray, brass, inlaid with silver, Mosul, first half of the thirteenth century. Source: The Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich (inv. No. 26-N-118). Reproduced with permission.

a centrifugal arrangement of four harpies with interlaced wings. The two pictorial friezes comprise a series of lobed medallions on a dense T-fret background. The medallions alternate between four-lobed and eight-lobed compositions enclosing human and animal figures on a tight scroll background (Sarre and Van Berchem 1907; Von Gladiss 2006).

The main figural types on the tray are representations of the "princely cycle" (rulers, hunters and musicians) as well as planetary and astrological signs. Both pictorial genres are common on inlaid Mosul metalwork. Less common are scenes such as acrobats and fencers, though they have parallels on the silver inlaid brass basin (1238–1240) made for the Ayyubid sultan al-ʿAdil signed by Ahmad al-Dhaki, now at the Louvre Museum (inv. 5991), and the Blacas ewer, dated 1232, at the British Museum (AO 1866.12-29.61). In addition, both the Louvre basin and the Blacas ewer share the same T-fret background interspersed with the lobed medallions, thus suggesting a close stylistic relationship and perhaps the presence of pattern books that various craftsmen drew upon (Raby 2012: 17–18; Rice 1957: 301–310; Allan, 2014).

The Munich tray is one of five objects that bear the name of Badr al-Din Lu'lu'. They include a box at the British Museum, a candlestick in the Hermitage, two trays in Munich and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and a basin in Kiev (Rice 1950). These five objects along with the Blacas ewer and a pen box in the David Collection, dated 1255–1256, that have inscriptions stating that they were made in Mosul are at the core of the evidence that Mosul was a major center for the production and distribution of silver inlaid brasses in the first half of the thirteenth century. Based on stylistic evidence, workshops of interconnected groups of craftsmen using the *nisba al-mawsili* (of or from Mosul), and circumstantial sociopolitical context, Raby (2012) demonstrates that around 19 objects can be attributed to Mosul. These objects are mostly candlesticks, ewers, basins, trays, and pen boxes. Stylistically, the decorative style of the Mosul school of inlaid brasses is characterized by polylobed cartouches and horizontal fields with a rich variety of figural compositions, T-fret backgrounds, and dedicatory and benedictory inscriptions. The Munich tray is just a most elaborate example.

Evidence for Mosul's brass production is surprisingly limited in the literary sources of the period, yet the few references that survive are reliable first-hand accounts. The Spanish traveler Ibn Saʿid gave an account of Mosul from his journey, most probably in 1250, indicating that "there are many crafts in the city, especially inlaid brass vessels which are exported to rulers." In addition, the chronicler Sibt ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1256/1257) reported on the relative prices of inlaid basins, pen boxes, and ewers sold in the Mosul *suq* after an attack in 1237 (Rice 1957). Mosul's own historian Ibn al-Athir (d. 1232) talks extensively about the Mosul trade in general but he does not mention brass except in referring to the copper mines in the Mosul region (Ibn al-Athir 1963: 66).

Although only two extant pieces of metalwork bearing inscriptions state explicitly that they were made in Mosul, the Munich tray is one of 27 inlaid brasses dated to the thirteenth century that have signatures linking them to Mosul (Raby 2012: tables 58–64). In addition to identifying individual artists and their styles, these signatures highlight the complex social and economic relationships among metalwork craftsmen and patrons. The relevant inscriptions can be grouped under three rubrics:

- Inscriptions stating that the object is made in Mosul. To date, only two brasses bear such inscriptions: the Blacas ewer at the British Museum dated to 1232, and a pen box at the David Collection dated to 1255–1256.
- Inscriptions bearing the "artist's" signature. These are signatures of craftsmen using the *nisba al-mawsili* or stating that they are the apprentice (*tilmidh* or *ghulam*) of craftsmen who use the *nisba*. In addition, at least two known

workshops operated in Mosul during the first half of the thirteenth century, the workshop of Ibrahim ibn Mawaliya, who signed the undated Louvre ewer, and the workshop of Ahmad al-Dhaki, who signed the Cleveland ewer of 1223 and the Louvre basin. Both masters are acknowledged by other craftsmen who proudly identified themselves as their apprentices. In the case of Ibn Mawaliya, his apprentices were Ismaʿil ibn Ward, who signed the 1220 box in the Benaki Museum and Qasim ibn ʿAli, who signed the Freer ewer. To those we can add the artist of the unsigned Doha ewer datable to the 1220s (Allan 1982; Kana'an 2013). Al-Dhaki's workshop is known from the signatures of ʿUmar ibn al-Hajj Jaldak, who signed the Metropolitan Museum ewer of 1226, and the Boston candlestick of 1225–1226 (Rice 1953, 1957).

- Inscriptions bearing the names of persons of influence who ordered or were recipients of these objects. While the five objects with the name of Badr al-Din Luʾluʾ, including the Munich tray, bear examples of a patron's signature, other inscriptions name the recipient of the object. For example, historical chronicles repeatedly mention Badr al-Din Luʾlu's gift-giving as part of his policy of diplomatic negotiations in the turbulent political context of Syria and Jazira. Based on stylistic and sociopolitical evidence, it is most probable that the Freer ewer of 1232 and the Doha ewer of the 1220s were presented as diplomatic gifts from Badr al-Din Luʾluʾ, and that the names inscribed on these ewers were those of their recipients rather than patrons (Kana'an 2012, 2013).

One of the most distinctive features of the Mosul school of inlaid brasses is the preponderance of figural imagery in increasingly rich and varied combinations. The princely cycle with its hunting and feasting scenes known from Khurasan is seamlessly combined with athletic activities, agricultural vignettes, and planetary configurations. While calligraphy remained a visible component of the decorative composition, in most cases its form and content were subsidiary to the complex arabesques and elaborate figural compositions.

The decorative language and motifs on the Mosul brasses are closely related to the pictorial content and style of Jaziran scientific and narrative manuscripts. The six surviving frontispieces of the copy of a poetic compendium, the *Kitab al-Aghani* (Book of Songs) made for Badr al-Din Luʾluʾ in the 1210s, for example, depict the ruler in various characteristic pursuits including his being enthroned, on horseback, holding a bow and arrow, and surrounded by standing courtiers, singers, or dancers. All these figural types have close examples in Mosul brasses including on the Munich tray.

Other Jaziran illustrated manuscripts, such as the Syriac Gospel Lectionary of 1216–1222 (British Library 7170) or the Lectionary of 1220 (Ms. Siriaco 559, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican) form a visual link with the social context of Mosul metalwork. Several inlaid brasses from or attributed to Mosul, including the superb Freer canteen (see Redford and Hoffman, CHAPTER 16), depict figural scenes that are related to the Christological and hagiographical iconography of the Syriac church. Recent research suggests that rather than interpreting the Mosul brasses with Christian themes only as trade objects that are meant to satisfy the demand of the Crusaders, Mosul brasses with Christian iconography are better understood as reflections of a local Syriac context and as evidence of the social, economic, and political interaction between Muslims and Christians in Jazira (Ecker and Fitzherbert 2012; Snelders 2010; see also Hoffman and Redford, CHAPTER 16).

Conclusions

The significant number of surviving objects from the period 1050–1250 reflects a rich variety of shapes and forms with increasingly complex decorative programs and distinct stylistic schools. It also points to the *suq* or bazaar as a recurring theme that merits further consideration. *Suq*s are the main venue for the production and exchange of metalwork and the place of interaction between individuals (patrons, users, craftsmen) and objects (materials, production, exchange). Taking this into consideration leads us to conclude with two main observations:

1 *Metalwork objects reflect a network of individuals who produced and used them* For any object that is readily available in the *suq*, whether plain or decorated, someone would have had to think about its form and design; purchase the necessary materials; provide a place for production; cast, make, or purchase it from somewhere else; design, carve and inlay it; then put the finished object on show in a shop. This represents perhaps the simplest chain of production in a metalwork object; evidence from objects bearing multiple names and signatures such as the Bobrinski bucket or zebu and calf aquamanile clearly suggest that every step could be the result of the involvement of many individuals. Considering that the main condition for commercial transactions was a person's rationality or their capacity to reason soundly (i.e., being *rashid*), craftsmen and/or merchants could have been male and female who are free or enslaved, Muslim or non-Muslim, and resident or itinerant. They all have equal legal rights in commercial transactions and as such are potential patrons, craftsmen and merchants (Kana'an, 2009).

Sources for the study of metalwork from 1050 to 1250 include the signatures on objects as well as the literary and historical accounts, geographical writings, and jurisprudence and *hisba* manuals for the specific context. These sources point to the complex social networks for the production and exchange of metalwork as well as the extensive commercial activities and trade networks. Signatures such as *ghulam* and *tilmidh* also go beyond the definition of artist to describe a variety of relationships between masters and their apprentices ranging from full servitude to a limited term student–teacher apprenticeship. Collectively, signatures imply a sense of interdependence with a person or group with whom the artist or apprentice was affiliated through employment or training. This suggests the need to develop a nuanced understanding of the master–apprentice relationship that includes workshop settings and itinerant craftsmen working for multiple masters and centers of production.

2 *Metalwork objects reflect a network of materials and transactions that led to their production and use*

Most of the objects surviving from the period 1050–1250 are made out of brass or bronze alloys. Other important materials for metalworking were crucible steel, used for weapons; iron, used for anything from horseshoes to agricultural implements; copper and a range of copper alloys which were used for scientific instruments and for everyday items. When these latter objects were inlaid and/or worked in repoussé, they became objects of considerable beauty, and presumably considerable expense, patronized by the court as well as the merchant classes. Lead was occasionally used, though so few lead or pewter objects survive that its precise role is unknown.

We have lost almost everything of precious metal because of rulers regularly melting down gold and silver objects for coin. One noteworthy exception is the Harari hoard of silver gilt pieces, inlaid with niello, now in Cairo (Allan 1977: figs. 63–68). These date from the late tenth to the twelfth century and were presumably a hoard which was buried by its owner when danger threatened and was never retrieved. We can gauge something of the quality of work in precious metal not only from these few surviving pieces but also from the surviving inlaid brasses produced in Herat between *c.* 1170 and 1220, in which the quality of repoussé work is so outstanding and the pictorial designs so beautifully worked in inlay that they may well have been made by precious metal craftsmen working with base metal at a period of silver shortage.

The period between 1050 and 1250 was also a time of mass production, when casting not only provided artists with the possibility of creating beautiful pieces, like the zebu and calf aquamanile discussed above but also provided a quick and efficient way of making fittings for other objects – legs, handles, lids, and so on, and thus reducing the toil and labor in meeting the demands of what appears to have been a growing middle-class market (see Contadini, CHAPTER 17). This also meant that single objects were produced not by a single craftsman but by a group of artisans – a caster, a sheet metalworker, a designer perhaps, and an inlayer, making the Arabic verbs sometimes used in their inscriptions, *sanaʿa* or *ʿamala* (both meaning "to make"), difficult to interpret with precision. Mass production is also evident in the hammered and spun inverted-pear shaped brass ewer typical of Mosul. The availability of mass-produced parts and the evidence of the work of multiple craftsmen on a given object lead us to further question the roles of the artist in a given work.

Finally, textual evidence suggests that pre-Mongol *suq*s were highly organized and that city officials kept tight control on the production and trade of objects, including metalwork. In an attempt to understand the inscription on the Hermitage pen case of 1148, Giuzalian (1968) discussed the textual evidence for the use of a single word in the inscription – *bayyaʿ* – throughout twelfth-century Khurasan. He demonstrated that *bayyaʿ* was used to describe individuals who performed different roles in the *suq* including being shopkeepers or shop-owners, wholesalers of goods, brokers or commissioners. Further west, Ibn al-Athir refers in his book on the *atabeg*s of Mosul to a variety of market functionaries including *muhtasib*s (supervisors), tax-farmers, foreign traders, and a range of partnership agreements between producers and merchants: Muslim and non-Muslim, as well as local and foreign (Kana'an, 2012). These thriving *suq*s then are essential in our understanding of the social and economic history of metalwork.

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19

Ceramics and Circulation

Oliver Watson

The Qualities of Pottery

Pottery has a special place in the study of the past, a place which derives from its material properties. Pottery *survives* like no other material. Fired pottery is brittle and breaks, but it is otherwise immensely durable. Most metals and all organic materials rust, corrode, decay, or rot: fragments of a well-fired pot can survive millennia of burial even in extreme soil conditions that would destroy other materials. Glazes, like glass, may be vulnerable to chemical attack but well-fired clay is resistant.

In contrast to other common materials of the pre-modern world, pottery is not easily repaired and cannot be recycled (Milwright 2001). The stones, bricks, and wood of architecture are easy to plunder and reuse. Metal is reworked or smelted down; cloth, if not repairable or reusable, is collected for paper-making; broken glass is valuable in the manufacture of new glass; wood is easily repurposed, if only as fuel. Evidence from archaeology shows that the systematic recovery of recyclable materials has been practiced everywhere – the picking over of rubbish dumps allows the poorest to scratch a subsistence living. Pottery, however, has no value as a recycled material – broken bits are of little use, the clay has been irreversibly changed by the firing process, and the labor and fuel, the key costs involved, are simply unrecoverable. These two qualities – durability and non-recyclability – mean that pottery is discarded at the end of its useful life, but it does not disappear.

Ward-Perkins (2005: 239) comments soberingly, “It is a reasonable supposition that, somewhere in the soil, almost all the pottery vessels ever made survive in fragments, waiting to be excavated and studied.” The survival rate of every other manufactured material is by contrast almost vanishingly small: only from the sixteenth and particularly from the seventeenth century do other materials begin to

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survive in quantities that allow for comparable study. This is particularly true of Islamic societies where unlike many others civilizations the dead, however important, are not buried with grave goods. Islamic material history therefore lacks troves of important objects in good condition. Pottery is the only fully representative material.

There are further properties of pottery that add to its interest:

Ubiquity: pottery is found everywhere in the pre-modern Islamic world. Other materials (metal, glass, and textiles in particular) were certainly as widely manufactured but lack of evidence makes their histories uncertain.

Connectedness: techniques and styles are transported across large distances. Their particularities allow the identification of great ceramic families stretching across time and space.

Individuality: pots made at a particular site are rendered individual by distinct clays or details in making, helping identify provenance and date with some precision. This stands in contrast to metalwork, textiles, glass, or arts of the book, for example, where determination of provenance is much less helped by their materials and only to a small degree by technical differences.

Range: pottery is made in a wide variety of qualities, representing different functions at different social levels – from large, functional vessels used in transport and storage to fine, decorated tableware.

These properties of pottery mean that it can illuminate many different topics: manufacturing and mercantile activity; the volume and distance of trading connections; types of cuisine and habits of dining. Fashions change rapidly and can spread far and wide. Consumption reflects economic prosperity or decline, which in turn may be mapped to wider political events.

The Status of Pottery

The bibliography of pottery is large compared to that on other materials and is only surpassed perhaps by those of architecture and the arts of the book. However, in this lies a danger. Pottery's survival rate gives it a very high profile: it provides the majority of objects in museum displays, having been avidly collected since the late nineteenth century (Watson 1999). The art trade sells more pots than anything else; iconic pieces are repeatedly published and archaeological reports contain swathes of pottery. The danger is that we take this profile to indicate that pottery was a high-status material. This is certainly not the case. Pottery even at its best was never an elite material. Individual patrons' names are rare even on heavily inscribed wares and are rarely identifiable; there is only one documented instance of a court workshop (Necipoğlu 1990). Pottery stands at a lower level of social esteem than good textiles or arts of the book. Chinese porcelain presents the only exception to this, and contemporary texts highlight the prestige of this exotic luxury (Kahle 1941). However, even here, recent archaeological discoveries suggest that high prestige was reserved for wares of the finest quality, as more ordinary types arrived in vast numbers and are found distributed far beyond restricted court circles.

A significant indication of status is seen in the regularity with which pots copied more expensive materials. Chinese ceramics were copied in three waves – in the ninth, twelfth, and fifteenth centuries. But more pervasive was the copying of metalwork and in particular of silver. This habit was not confined to the Islamic world but is seen across the world at every period, from Ancient Greece and Tang China to eighteenth-century Europe (Vickers 1986). In the Islamic world some of the earliest glazed pottery copies metalwork (Watson 2004: section B), and close dependency on metal forms continued over centuries. In the case of silver, where surviving objects are among the rarest of what were once plentiful products for the elite, a continuous history would only be traceable as a reflection in the surviving ceramic skeuomorphs (Watson 2011). Pottery in metal forms can be seen as "aspirational" – providing versions of expensive goods at cheaper cost for the less well-off. Pottery worldwide provides luxuries for a middling class. The wealthy in Islamic societies could afford silver, even perhaps gold, and plentiful Chinese porcelain, but many further down the social and economic scale still had sufficient disposal income to indulge in decorated and decorative products – but, unlike silver and other metals, products which had no intrinsic worth, were fragile and were discarded when broken.

Circulation of Pottery

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of pottery making in the early Islamic period is what we might term its "circulation" – the processes from which its connectedness derives. Pottery circulated across the Islamic world and beyond in three different but interrelated ways.

First as physical goods carried in both land and sea-borne trade, of value in themselves, or as the containers for more valuable cargo. The trade in ceramics involved both wares made in the Islamic world and traded across it and beyond and wares such as Chinese products imported into the Islamic world. Outward trade is best exemplified by the large early Islamic turquoise-glaze storage jars made in lower Iraq and found on sites from East Africa to China and Japan. Inward trade in the early period was made up almost entirely of Chinese wares. Trade within the Islamic world is best followed in fine wares, traded for themselves, such as the Iraqi Abbasid lusterwares, or the medieval wares of Kashan.

Secondly pottery can travel as "ideas" suggested by the arrival in a new place of new types of pottery and new styles of decoration, possibly brought by immigrants with habits and practices learnt elsewhere. Both the object and the habit may then be imitated locally by potters and their customers – ideas have been transferred as well as imported objects. The most extraordinary transfer of ideas and habits was the use of fine glazed pottery itself – spreading quickly from the central Islamic lands across the entire Islamic empire.

Thirdly, potters themselves travel and set up workshops in new places. They bring new technologies and styles in making. Potters travel for economic reasons – to find profitable new markets where they can make a living. It is probable that this is the major mechanism for the dispersal of technologies. The copying of foreign styles in different techniques indicates that local potters were imitating an imported ware without knowing how to make it (Wilkinson 1973: chapter 6, nos. 40–51); this is not commonly found.

We can trace all three of these "circulation" activities in the first centuries of the Islamic period. They are often interrelated: the development of an export market might well encourage the makers themselves to migrate to establish workshops in the locality.

What follows is a discussion of the major examples of these movements. It is important to stress that this chapter concentrates almost entirely on fine ceramics alone. By "fine" we mean the very top levels of production – wares distinguished by their intrinsic technical difficulty, quality of making, and refinement of design. These are the most expensive wares – their expense deriving from the time taken in sourcing and preparation of materials, in the process of making and decorating, and in the training of potters to work at high levels of skill. However, fine wares represent but a very small fraction of pottery output altogether. The general estimates in excavations are that glazed wares usually represent less than 10 percent of the pottery found, and fine wares are often less than 10 percent of the glazed wares. Unglazed wares can be "fine" too, but it is the glazed wares that allow us to trace the circulations in detail.

The Beginnings of Islamic Fine Glazed Pottery

It is useful to divide pottery into a number of ceramic "families" – wares with a common origin that spread over large distances and develop local variants. Before we consider these, however, we must address the traditional explanation of the rise of Islamic glazed pottery – a story that has held sway for over a century. The sudden appearance of manifold types of glazed pottery across the Islamic world is an extraordinary phenomenon. From beginnings in the central Islamic lands in early Abbasid times the making of glazed pottery was found east and west, so that by the tenth century such pottery was produced everywhere from Spain to Central Asia – a veritable revolution in lands where glazed pottery had never been made or used before. The traditional story sees the arrival of Chinese stonewares and porcelains in the Abbasid court in the ninth century as the impetus for this revolution. This is an exciting, clear story, with material evidence in its support and it has been current for almost a century. However, in the view of this author, it is an insufficient account and wrong in its main premise.

Samarra, China, and the Origin of Islamic Polychrome Glazed Pottery

The classic story receives its most succinct telling in Arthur Lane's *Early Islamic Pottery*:

> It may be said at once that before the ninth century Islamic pottery was of almost negligible interest.

and

> The astonishing rise of Islamic pottery in the ninth century was in fact due to the discovery by the court that pottery could be an art worth encouraging; and the revelation came in the form of porcelain and stoneware imported to Baghdad from the Far East. (1947: 5, 10)

Early twentieth-century German excavations at Samarra on the Tigris north of Baghdad had provided clear and conclusive evidence, for here were found Chinese original white stonewares and porcelains alongside fine Islamic copies, known as Samarra wares. The pottery was thought to be a "court" art and was precisely datable: Samarra was founded as a palace city in 836; it functioned as the Abbasid capital from this date until the late ninth century, when the court returned to Baghdad, and Samarra was believed to have been largely abandoned. Iraq was the natural home for this technical development as it was the only part of the Islamic world that had an existing tradition of glazed pottery. Here, then, in the middle of the ninth century, was apparently found the material evidence laid out in a way which could not be clearer; the story has persisted to the present day with only minor modifications. The new Islamic wares, originally close copies of Chinese imports and later with painted decoration in blue or luster, mark the innovation of fine Islamic pottery, and their export across the Islamic world followed by local imitation is the engine of the spread of Islamic glazed pottery.

This story is now seriously challenged by a growing body of archaeological evidence. It relies on the inadequate notion of "influence": the imported Chinese wares apparently just "influenced" local potters and customers. This by itself does little to explain the revolution in the making and consumption of glazed fine wares, a practice which had no precedent in Iraq. It fails to address the widespread use of glazed pottery in Egypt and Syria before the ninth century and does not explain the complete independence of many early Islamic wares from Chinese types (Watson 2014). The earlier Iraqi glazed tradition was not of fine wares but of pottery technically and functionally different from the Samarra wares, and does not appear to have contributed greatly to their development.

The sections below present a different story – one in which the rise of the use of glazed pottery is an indigenous development in Islamic lands. It suggests that the pre-Islamic habit of using fine pottery first spread eastwards from Egypt and Syria to Iraq, where the subsequent fashion for Chinese wares led to new styles. Samarra can no longer maintain the central role it has played up until now: while an important site for the discovery and dating of the import of Chinese wares and their local copying, it can no longer be used to date the beginning of Islamic glazed pottery, or even of Samarra wares themselves.

What follows below is not intended to be a complete survey of fine glazed pottery but instead focuses on the major technical families, for these are what demonstrate the continual circulation of people, ideas, and practices across the Islamic world.

Ceramic Families

1 The Existing Iraqi Glazed Tradition

Iraq had a tradition since Parthian times and before of making glazed pottery (Simpson 1997a, 1997b; Watson 2004: section B). The technology was simple – earthenware vessels with alkaline glazes, usually colored blue-green with copper. The greater part of production in the early Islamic period consisted of large jars (Figure 19.1); smaller vessels including basins and bowls formed a much lesser part of the output. The larger jars were used for storage and transport, the smaller for the preparation of materials and other industrial and domestic uses.

The large jars, often with some bold applied decoration, were made in large numbers and are found on sites not just across the Middle East but also at sites along the Indian Ocean and China Sea routes: down East Africa, round India, throughout Southeast Asia, and in China and Japan. The major export product for which they were used is thought to have been *dibs* – a sweet date syrup much in demand across East Asia. The jars as pottery cannot have impressed the Chinese or their neighbors very much, though the colored glaze may have been a novelty: two rather elegant jars were found the tomb of a minor Chinese princess (Ho 1997).

The bowls and smaller vessels are found in Iraq alone and mostly are rough with pitted and bubbled glazes and pronounced tripod scars in the inside (Watson 2014: figs. 1–2). Decoration is limited. They were made for the workshop or at most for the kitchen, and cannot be described as "fine." It is not easy to trace a direct connection between this pottery and the Chinese-inspired Samarra wares of the ninth century, which are markedly superior in quality and differ in shape and styles. Neither does the Iraqi ware appear to have contributed to the widespread manufacture of molded wares with green lead-fluxed glazes which appear as an early glazed type across the Middle East (Watson 2004: section B).

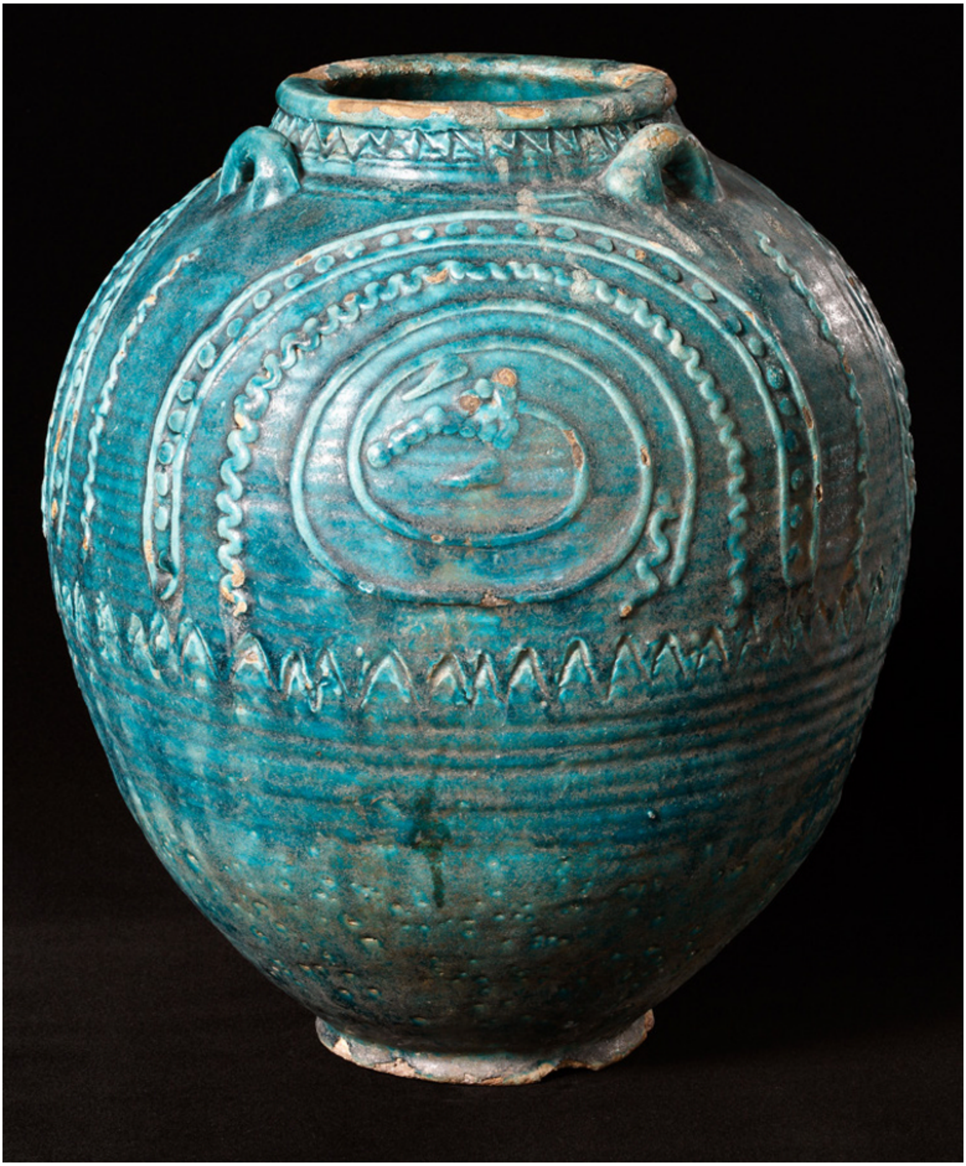

Figure 19.1 Jar, earthenware with turquoise glaze, Iraq, eighth century, height: 40 cm. Source: David Collection, Copenhagen, no. 27/2003. Reproduced with permission.

2 *Islamic Glazed Wares*

The largest and most inclusive family is that of glazed wares. With the exception of the Iraqi jars described above, there was no glazed pottery made in any of the lands that became the Islamic empire. Yet within a relatively short period – certainly by the tenth century – fine glazed and decorated ceramics were being made everywhere from Spain to Central Asia. It is possible to view these glazed wares as a single large extended family: they developed over the same period in response to new social needs and drew on a common origin. The common ancestry is indicated decisively by a very particular, one might even say peculiar, technique of supporting the vessels in the kiln: fired clay rods some 50–70 cm long and 5 cm in diameter were inserted into rows of holes in the kiln wall to act as supporting shelves for the wares during firing. This novel feature of kiln design has not been found anywhere else at any time in Europe or Asia. Yet, in the Islamic world it is found from end to end of the empire wherever glazed wares were made (Thiriot 1994; Watson 2004: 31, fn. 27). The wide distribution of this kiln type, combined with the rapid transfer of glazing itself and the concomitant social habit of using glazed pottery, indicates that the technology, product, and ideas all traveled together.

Making glazed pottery is more complicated and expensive than making unglazed pottery. Unglazed pottery is densely stacked in the kiln, exploiting all available space. It does not matter if the pots touch each other and so they are stacked side by side and on top of one another. The makers of glazed pottery have much more to contend with. They must understand, in addition to the matters of clay types, forming methods, kiln building and firing which are common to all potters, the technology of a completely different material – glass. Glazing is essentially the covering of a clay vessel with a thin coat of glass, and to accomplish this the potters need to be able to make a base glass (or order it from the glass-maker) which will "fit" the clay properly, melt at the right temperature, and be of the right color. They will need to grind the glass to a powder and apply it, suspended in water, to the dried but unfired pot. In stacking the kiln, they must ensure that no part of the glazed surface is in contact with anything else, for the glaze will stick fast to everything it touches as it fuses into a uniform covering and, when cool, will have to be broken away, damaging or breaking the pot. Much care therefore is needed in the stacking of the kiln – collapse of shelves or toppling of vessels can wreak havoc and potentially destroy a large part of the contents. "Wasters" – pots with damage so severe as to make them unsalable – are a continual and wasteful byproduct (but, being discarded nearby, usefully mark the presence of a workshop). The care needed in stacking the kiln means that space is inevitably less efficiently used than in making unglazed pottery, and this alone pushes up the cost.

The benefits of glazing are, however, manifold. A good glaze, impermeable and easy to clean, provides a hygienic as well as an attractive surface. It has the properties of glass – smooth, hard, and brilliant. It can easily be colored with metallic oxides to give a full spectrum of blues, greens, browns, and yellows. It can provide an opaque surface, white or tinted, or be left transparent to reveal incised or painted surface decoration. It gives potential for a whole new world of color and decorative possibilities with which unglazed pottery or other materials such as metal cannot compete. However, the social habit of using glazed pottery must also be created. Generations had managed without, so something changed with the arrival of Islam to encourage this new consumption, a consumption all the more puzzling as it deals with an item of some expense that has no intrinsic value. We are unable to say more at present than that the combined features of pottery as discussed above suggest that it appealed to "middling" urban classes whose earnings came in the form of cash not goods: military officers, legal, religious and other scholars, manufacturers, merchants, and tradesmen. In other words, all those classes which the establishment of Islam and Islamic rule encouraged and which expanded dramatically over the following centuries.

3 Late Roman Wares

While it has been stressed above that fine *glazed* pottery is an innovation of the Islamic period, fine *unglazed* pottery had been used extensively in the pre-Islamic period. Round the Mediterranean under Roman rule, a widespread culture of fine ceramic tableware had developed (Hayes 1972). The pots were not glazed but had a smooth gloss finish given by a refined clay slip, a thin solution of clay. These fine tablewares were eventually made on a truly industrial scale at a small number of sites and shipped in vast quantities to the Roman towns of the Mediterranean and beyond. The eastern Mediterranean was supplied largely by potteries in Anatolia and near Carthage in present-day Tunis. These potteries ceased production at the time of the Arab expansion and this must have presented a problem to the thousands of households in Syria and Egypt that had relied on the wares for their dining tables. However, at this time – the transition from the late antique to the Islamic period – we can see that other fine ceramics were available, some newly developed. All were unglazed but often had painted decoration: Coptic painted wares in Egypt, Jerash bowls and painted platters, Jerash Palace ware (described as "outstanding examples of the potters' art") in the Levant, and Fine Byzantine ware (Meyers 1997a, 1997b; Walmsley 2007: 52–53). This rich corpus, known almost only through fragmentary archaeological material, is datable to the seventh and eighth centuries and points to a strong continuing demand for fine ceramic tablewares. It is reasonable to see them as replacements for the large quantities of late Roman wares no longer arriving in the Islamic lands. It is in the context of these local developments that we find the origins of fine glazed Islamic pottery.

4 Coptic Glazed Ware and the Yellow Glazed Family

The first new Islamic glazed ware we find is in Egypt. First identified in Alexandria and termed "Coptic glazed ware" it occurs on dish shapes related closely to the late Roman types and appears in archaeological layers immediately above them. Mostly decorated with simple stripes or whorls of green, brown, white, and a brilliant yellow, these vessels often are painted with full brush loads of colored glaze, leaving parts of the surface unglazed. Other decorative schemes show painting in brown and particularly green in an overall opaque yellow glaze (Scanlon 1998).

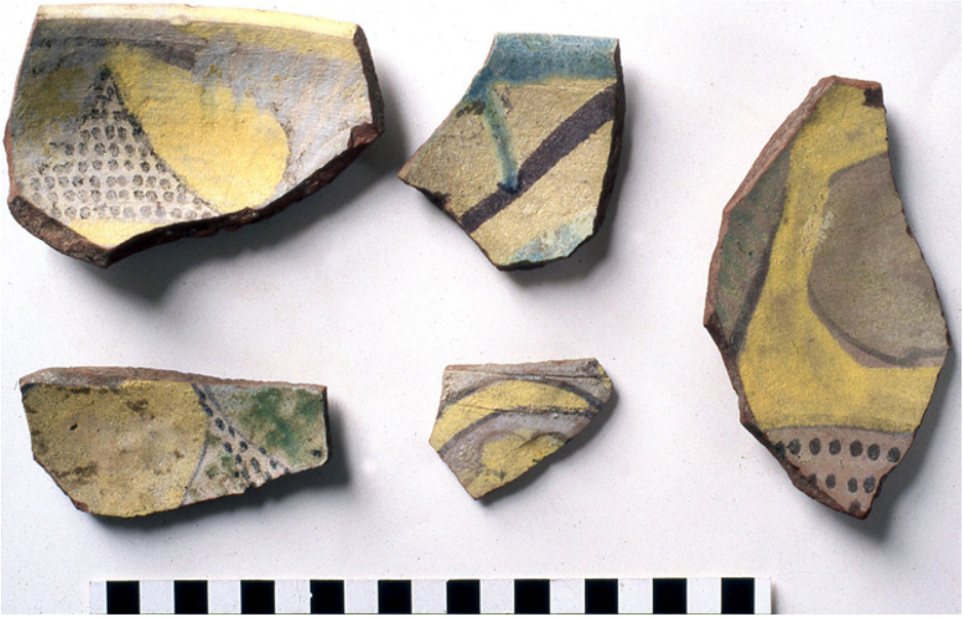

Figure 19.2 Sherds of Yellow Glazed family ware, earthenware, with painting in yellow, green, and white glazes, and in black pigment, Syria, Raqqa (finds from the Tell Aswad), late eighth or early ninth century, Raqqa Museum, Syria. Source: Oliver Watson. Reproduced with permission.

Coptic glazed ware was exported to sites on the eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea, where they are found in association with wares produced in a strikingly similar technique that are of local manufacture (Whitcomb 1991). The Syrian wares are grouped as the "Yellow Glazed" family after the predominant glaze color (Watson 1999a: 84–85). Yellow Glazed family wares are found in profusion on sites of the early Islamic period and with enough differences in fabric and details of shape and style to indicate that new workshops had been set up across Syria to supply local demand – major groups have been found at Antioch, Tarsus, and Raqqa (Figure 19.2), with new finds continually reported from other early Islamic sites (Watson 1999a: 84–85). Key factors unite this widespread Syrian production: deep bowl shapes with incurving rims, both large and small; decoration of painted green in an opaque yellow glaze; frequent use of lines of color running down from the rim; stippling and cross-hatched patterns, painting in deep brown or black under an amber glaze. Nothing about this pottery owes anything to China, and archaeological evidence shows it was being made in quantity in the second half of the eighth century. These are not "experimental" wares but the output of established and skilled workshops, yet our view of them is greatly hampered by the fact that they only survive as fragments.

None of these wares have attracted the attention of art historians or collectors: one Western museum alone exhibits a single piece of Coptic glazed ware in its Islamic gallery; none display any Yellow Glazed types. The importance of this tradition has thus been overlooked – an importance that lies not only in the claim to represent the first Islamic glazed pottery but also in illustrating the spread of manufacturing of this type from Egypt eastwards into the Levant and Syria proper. It does not stop here, however, for these wares are next found in Iraq. The excavations at Susa have revealed a wide variety of wares, including core Yellow Glazed family types – in particular green painted into opaque yellow, and using the characteristic Syrian bowl shape (Watson 2014: figs. 11–12).

The move to Iraq, we suggest, was occasioned by the Abbasid transfer of the Abbasid capital there after the fall of the Umayyads in 750, and the establishment of this new political and economic center brought with it a move of peoples: individuals employed directly by the court or providing other services. Those from the west brought with them the habit of fine glazed tablewares; the potters accompanied them.

Other opportunities to supply the burgeoning demands of the new centers came through Iraq's direct connection with the eastern sea routes. Basra became the main port for the China trade and the distribution center of imported goods inland. Among these goods were Chinese ceramics, which arrived in truly astonishing numbers.

5 *Chinese Imported Wares*

The Samarra finds allow us to see the full spectrum of the Chinese wares which arrived in ninth-century Iraq; whitewares of different qualities; whitewares splashed with green, some with incised decoration; various types of celadon; painted stoneware (Sarre 1925). The wreck of a Middle Eastern dhow off the island of Belitung in the Java Sea around 830, found in 1997, not only encapsulates this full range but provides graphic evidence for the first time of the true scale of the trade: this single small boat contained some 70 000 Chinese pots (Krahl 2011; see Shen, CHAPTER 8).

As outlined above, it has been long argued that the arrival of Chinese wares sparked the first interest in fine ceramics in the Islamic world. Two important considerations now suggest an almost complete reversal of this story. First that there was already an active production and consumption of fine decorated pottery in the Middle East in the form of Yellow Glazed wares: the Chinese wares thus entered a pre-existing market and were not responsible for its creation. Secondly, many of the Chinese types which arrived were made specifically for export. Most are bowls and dishes of sizes and shapes corresponding to those already made in the Middle East and with decorative schemes of the same sort already seen in the Yellow Glaze family wares, in particular the splashing with green (Krahl 2011: 140, 145, 167, 177, 186). Middle Eastern taste drove the trade, and Chinese manufacturers gladly supplied whatever was needed to the specifications of the Muslim merchants.

This reversal of the original story is well illustrated by a chance discovery on the Belitung wreck of three Chinese white bowls painted in blue (Krahl 2011: 209–211). The origin of the painted design is not Chinese but Islamic – a motif used not infrequently on Iraqi whitewares also painted in blue. The bowls offer a rather poor imitation of this pattern: the Chinese whiteware potters were unskilled in painting having no tradition of this technique. The Chinese copies – just three single pieces out of a cargo of 70 000 – are clearly not a commercial shipment, and indeed only a handful of other fragments of pieces decorated in this way are known. The Belitung bowls are surely production samples: copies of an Iraqi original made to demonstrate what the Chinese could offer in this line. These particular samples never arrived and if others did they were perhaps judged not good enough, for Chinese export of this type never developed.

There were qualities in Chinese wares that could not be matched by the local products. The hardness and brilliance of Chinese porcelains and stonewares could not be copied in earthenware, but the much admired whiteness, a novelty, could be well imitated with an opaque white glaze. Conveniently, such a glaze could be achieved by a minor processing adjustment to the popular yellow glaze.

6 *Islamic White Glazed Wares*

The main impact of the Chinese imports is the adoption of an opaque white glaze in place of the previous yellow. Particular details of the Chinese shapes such as raised radial ribs and notched rims were occasionally copied, but a generalized Chinese-inspired shape eventually became standard. Some Islamic pieces were left undecorated, but the opaque white glaze surface offered the opportunity for new decorative developments – in particular painting in blue and decoration in luster. These Islamic inventions were applied to white glazed bowls in both Chinese and local shapes.

Painting in blue followed the same technique as the splashing in green – the pigment was brushed on to the glaze surface after it had been applied but before firing, and sank into the glaze during firing. However, the patterns are distinctly different: inscriptions or geometric and floral motifs are applied boldly, sparsely and precisely (Figure 19.3; Tamari 1995; Watson 2004: section D). Generally in its aesthetic the painting in blue is clean and uncluttered and very different from the splashed green or luster designs (discussed below) with which they were contemporary and which were made by the same potters: blue painting and luster appear together and both were combined with splashes in green.

Both the luster and blue-on-whitewares were exported widely across the Islamic world and along the China sea route to sites as far apart as Cordoba in Spain and Thailand in Southeast Asia (Ho 1997). Both techniques were a monopoly of the Iraqi potters: neither luster nor cobalt-blue painting are found elsewhere at this time. However, the use of an opaque white glaze decorated with splashes of green or in-glaze painting in green and brown spread quickly, and by the tenth century

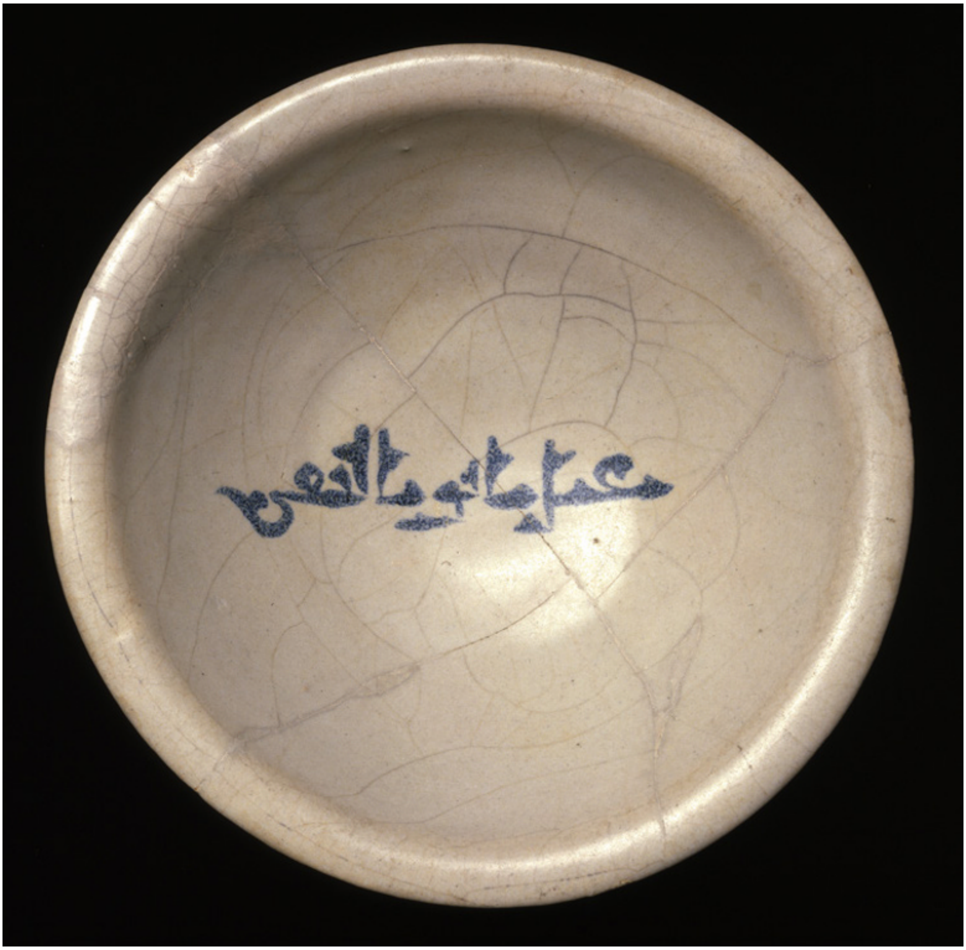

FIGURE 19.3 Dish, earthenware bowl, painted in blue in an opaque, white glaze, Iraq, ninth century, diameter: 20.5 cm. Source: David Collection, Copenhagen, no. 21/1965. Reproduced with permission.

was being made everywhere from Spain to Central Asia. We cannot trace this process in detail, though the fact that the technique rather than the styles traveled indicates that it was taken by practicing potters. Only in Nishapur in eastern Iran can we locate a local type copying a standard Iraqi motif (Watson 2004: Cat. D7). At Cordoba in Spain local shapes are decorated with designs including animals and humans in green and brown (Musées de Marseilles 1995: 105–117), while in Samarqand in Central Asia, some 5000 miles distant, the same technology was used for geometric patterns painted in green alone (Shishkina and Pavchinskaja 1992: 53, nos. 98–109).

The opaque white glazed tradition is the single most important ceramic technology to have spread across the Islamic world and beyond. It reached a high point with high-quality copying of Chinese whitewares in ninth-century Iraq but provided decorative wares of differing qualities and distinct styles across the whole of North Africa, the Islamic Middle East, and Central Asia. It had an important further history in Europe where it spread far and formed the technical basis for all fine pottery from the medieval period until the eighteenth century (Caiger-Smith 1973).

7 Splashed Wares

Confusion has grown over the definition of "splashed ware": pottery in different techniques is grouped together because of a visual similarities (Watson 2014: postscript 3). The term is best restricted to one particular technique which unites a widespread family of wares: a red earthenware body covered with a thin white slip over which lies a transparent glaze with splashes of copper green, iron brown, and manganese purple. These are applied as oxides which stain the glaze; as the glaze is fluxed with lead it becomes quite fluid as it matures in the kiln causing the colors to run in an uncontrolled fashion. The first wares rely on this effect alone, by the tenth century patterns are incised through the slip to give a dark outline which the colors more or less follow (Watson 2004: section F).

Splashed ware has in the past generated much argument among specialists on the extent, if any, of Chinese influence. In the 1920s, it appeared obvious that the Islamic ware derived from the renowned Tang splashed earthenwares, then being avidly collected in Europe. Today, it is known that the Chinese ware is for funerary use alone and had stopped being made by the mid-eighth century: no Chinese sherd has been authoritatively identified on any Islamic site. Other kinds of Chinese wares found at Samarra, such as whitewares splashed with green, or "three-color" wares (Rawson *et al.* 1989), do not provide prototypes for the classic Islamic type. The similarities with Tang splashed wares are more likely to be coincidental, the same materials giving similar effects. No link with the Chinese need be assumed: the Islamic splashed ware does not copy Chinese shapes, nor are the incised designs at all Chinese in character.

Variants of the splashed ware family are found over a wide area, from Egypt eastwards to Central Asia, and are dated from the ninth to the twelfth century. Their history and connections are not yet clear.

8 Eastern Slip Wares

A family of wares decorated in color slips and made in Iran and Central Asia from the tenth century are closely related to splashed ware in their basic technology. Made of red clays covered with (usually) white slip, they are painted in further colored slips (predominantly black, but also red) under a transparent glaze (Watson 2004: section G; Wilkinson 1973: chapters 3–5). The colored slip does

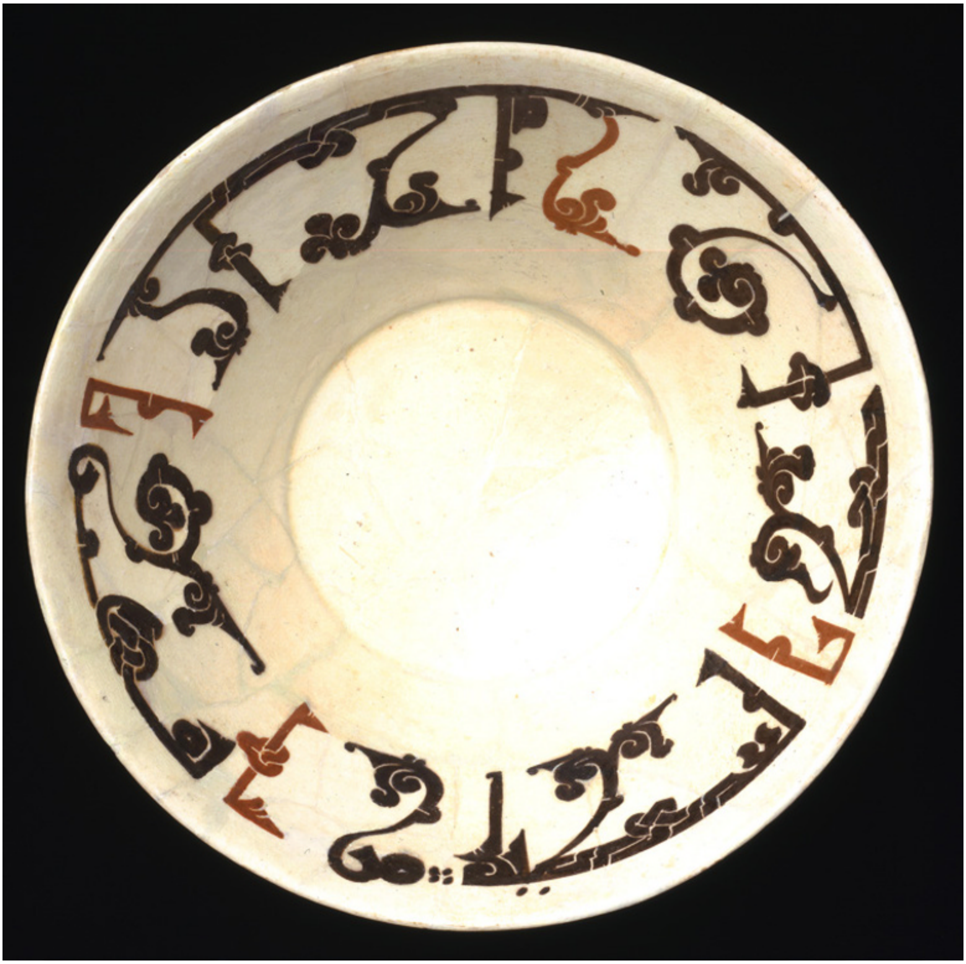

Figure 19.4 Bowl, earthenware, with a white slip and painted in black and red slips under a transparent glaze, eastern Iran, Nishapur or Samarqand, tenth century, diameter: 27 cm. The inscription reads: "He who believes in a reward [from God] is generous with gifts." Source: David Collection, Copenhagen, no. 22/1974. Reproduced with permission.

not run during the firing and so differs from splashed wares in presenting a precise and clear pattern. The shapes are similar to splashed wares; most characteristic is a bowl with straight flaring sides on a low foot-ring and flat dishes with broad rims. The best quality pieces were made in eastern Iran (Nishapur) and Central Asia (especially Samarqand): technically superb bowls and dishes of remarkable size with epigraphic decoration of great skill and complexity (Figure 19.4). In shape and design these appear to be copies of silver vessels, the black decoration imitating niello work. There is no Chinese feature to be found in these wares, and they must be deemed a completely local invention. The plentiful inscriptions – mostly blessings, homilies, and aphorisms in Arabic – promote virtuous, gentlemanly, and generous behavior in a context of convivial gatherings (Pancaroğlu 2001).

The slip ware family occurs in a great variety of styles and qualities – simple rough wares in western Iran, strikingly colored densely patterned wares with animals and human figures in more eastern Central Asia. The technique was not developed to any extent in Iraq or further west, and the pottery is not found exported out of its region of manufacture.

9 *Luster Decoration*

Luster differs from the ceramic families discussed above in that it is a decorative technique which can be applied to different ceramic wares, and indeed to glass as well as pottery. Its history indicates that it was a very particular technique, perhaps held as a monopoly by a small number of potters; it is remarkable that we can follow the movement of the technique, and therefore of the potters who carried it, over long distances and over many centuries (Caiger-Smith 1985).

Luster is a difficult and complicated process and importantly does not reveal any of its methods of manufacture from a study of the finished article. In this it differs from all the other potting techniques we have discussed above, where much of the process is evident in the final pot. Though we argue that techniques are generally carried by potters as they move around, it is possible that an experienced potter, perhaps with help from a friendly glassmaker, could work out how most pots are made, and therefore attempt an imitation without being shown how. Not so with luster. This is also shown in the peculiarity of its movement: it does not spread like other techniques, finally being made over a large area, but instead moves to a new locality and ceases to be made in the old.

The technique was taken from glassmaking. A pigment containing oxides of silver and copper is applied to the surface of an already glazed and fired vessel; a second firing at a low temperature reduces the oxides to microscopic metallic particles which are incorporated into the surface of the glaze. These give a range of colors from yellow to brown to red, some with metallic and mother-of-pearl reflections for which the technique is valued. The second firing must have substantially increased the cost.

Luster is first encountered on glass in Egypt and Syria in the eighth century, but the relationship between the Egyptian and Syrian finds and their precise chronology is unclear (Carboni 2001: 50–69). In the ninth century lustered glass is found in Iraq, and the same styles of decoration are found on the earliest luster-painted pottery. We can reasonably presume that the luster glassmakers moved east to Iraq in the early Abbasid period, perhaps accompanying the potters who moved at the same time. These potters then adopted the luster technique to decorate their new opaque white glazed wares (Watson 2004: section E). The making of lustered glass seems to have ceased further west at this time, and appears to have been little exploited on glass in Iraq. Lustered pottery, however, developed into a great industry with a number of different styles in the ninth and into the tenth century. Made by the same Iraqi potters making white glazed wares painted in blue, it was traded throughout the Islamic world from Spain to Central Asia; very large quantities are found at Fustat. It is found on the sea routes as far as western India and Southeast Asia but is not yet reported from China.

At some point in the tenth century the making of luster pottery ceased in Iraq, and by the beginning of the eleventh it was well established in Egypt. The connection with Iraqi production is seen in similar vessel shapes and styles of painting, but the Fatimid potters soon developed their own idioms (Watson 2004: section J).

In Iraq, luster decoration in the tenth century had been restricted to a single style of decoration, but in Egypt a wide range of patterns and styles proliferated – arabesque and geometric, animal and figural, inscriptions and scrollwork (Philon 1980: chapter 4). Less carefully finished, the pots are not of as consistent a quality as those of Iraq. The numerous potters' names indicate a large number of workshops. Fatimid luster pottery is occasionally found outside Egypt, but it does not appear to have been a major export item. We presume the move from Iraq to Egypt was prompted by the economic decline of Iraq in the tenth century and the simultaneous economic development of Egypt under the Fatimids.

10 Fritware

In the late eleventh century, Egyptian potters made use of an ancient Egyptian technology perhaps preserved in bead-making, to develop fritware (also known as stonepaste) – an artificial fabric composed largely of ground quartz, with small additions of glass and white clay. Its advantage was that it was brilliant white, and therefore needed neither a white-slip coating nor the opaque white glaze, hitherto the only options for obtaining a white surface. Perhaps initially developed to copy new kinds of imported Chinese porcelain with fine incised decoration, it was used with brilliantly colored glazes and incised patterns in Islamic styles (Watson 1999b; Bongianino 2013). It was also used by the luster potters.

And it was these two technologies – luster and fritware – which took part in the next dramatic move: at some point, perhaps during the social and economic unrest accompanying the decline of the Fatimids and their eventual fall in 1171 or possibly earlier, potters moved to Syria and to Iran, where in the twelfth century major ceramic fritware industries, including lusterware production, were set up. Luster production at this point ceased in Egypt.

In Syria, the site of Raqqa was first identified as a major producer of fritwares, including luster decoration and underglaze painting (see below) (Jenkins-Madina 2006). Early Syrian wares were for long attributed to Egypt, so similar were they. It is now seen that these so-called Tell Minis wares are actually the first stage of fritware production in Syria, perhaps already in the later eleventh century, with the classic "Raqqa wares" representing a stylistic and technical change in the later twelfth or early thirteenth century. Furthermore, recent evidence suggests that several centers were engaged in manufacturing very similar types, and that Qalʿat Jaʿbar, Balis Meskene, and others in northern Syria must now be placed alongside Raqqa (Blackman and Redford 1997; Porter and Watson 1987; Tonghini 1998; Watson forthcoming).

In Iran, the leading fritware production center was established at Kashan sometime in the mid-twelfth century, with indications that the migration of potters from Egypt (possibly via Syria) were responsible. Kashan produced the best quality fritwares, though other centers such as Nishapur and Samarqand show that the technique spread further east. All made monochrome and molded wares, but Kashan made the best underglaze-painted ceramics and is alone known to have produced lusterwares, developing new styles of painting and becoming a major producer of tilework (Watson 1985). In addition, an entirely new process of overglaze enamel painting, known as *minaʾi* was invented there. The Kashan potteries continued large-scale production of vessels and tiles until the Mongol invasions in the early 1220s when production was disrupted for some four decades (Watson 1985, 2004, sections L–P).

11 *Underglaze Painting*

Underglaze painting is a decorating technique: pigments (metal oxides) are painted onto the surface of the pot before it is glazed and fired: the decoration is thus fixed under a clear or tinted transparent glaze. The technical achievement was to fix fine freely painted polychrome decoration under the glaze without the colors running, and to achieve this in a single firing.

The development of this technique can be most closely followed in Iran in the later decades of the twelfth century, where a thick black slip-like pigment is gradually thinned down until free painting which does not flow in the glaze is achieved (Figure 19.5). The earliest dated piece in the fully developed technique is of 601 (1204) (Watson 1979).

We cannot be certain that underglaze painting was Iran's invention alone, it may have already been under development in Egypt and moved with the frit body to Syria and Iran. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, fully developed underglaze painted wares were being made in all three countries (Watson 2004: section N).

Later Circulations

Underglaze painted fritware forms the last significant technical development in Islamic pottery and represents the last major circulation as its use spread across central and eastern Islamic lands. It forms the basis for all the best quality fine

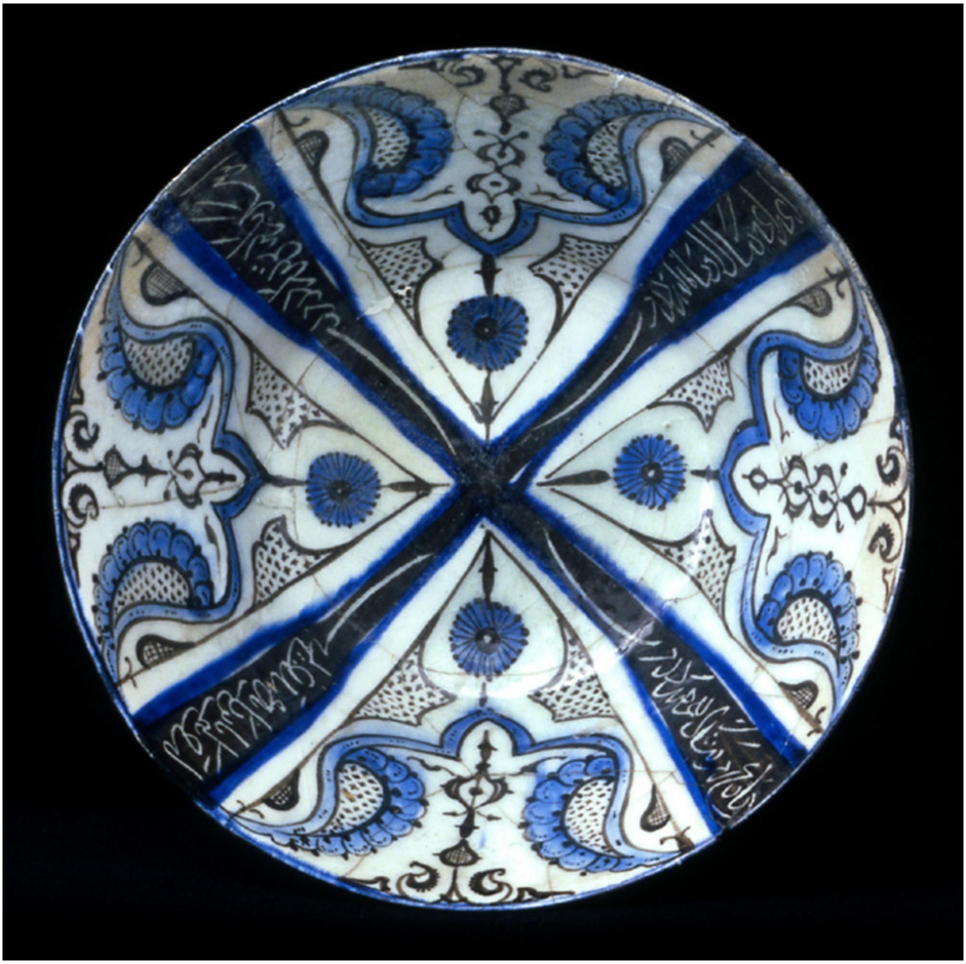

FIGURE 19.5 Bowl, fritware painted in black and blue under a transparent glaze, Iran, Kashan, beginning of thirteenth century, diameter: 21 cm. Source: David Collection, Copenhagen, no. Isl 26. Reproduced with permission.

glazed pottery from the thirteenth century onwards. After this date it is styles of painting which move – Iranian styles of Kashan found in Syria in the early thirteenth century and Mongol Iranian styles in Syria, Egypt, and the lands of the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century (Watson 2004: sections K, Q). The arrival of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain in the fourteenth century saw widespread copying across the Middle East and there is evidence of potters working in this Chinese style moving westwards from Timurid Central Asia during the fifteenth century (Golombek *et al.* 1996; Lane 1957: chapter 2). There appears to be less exchange of this kind in the sixteenth century and after. Ottoman provincial workshops were set up by potters sent from the ceramic center at Iznik, which had become the main supplier of vessels and tiles to the court and capital in Istanbul during the sixteenth century (Atasoy and Raby 1989; Lane 1957: 61–63; Watson 2004: section T). Iznik motifs find even a rare reflection in one class of Safavid pottery (Lane 1957: 80).

Conclusions

The particular qualities of pottery allow us to tell from buried fragments a story of extraordinary movements of people, technologies, and ideas from the very first centuries of Islamic rule. Major innovative technologies were carried from region to region by skilled potters who established workshops at places hundreds or thousands of miles from their origins. We can read this history in many ways: first and foremost simply as the history of technique and style in a material in which the achievements of medieval Islamic craftsmen were second only to the Chinese. This history is interesting enough in its own right but will only be fully explained when seen in the context of the social, economic, and political histories in which it is embedded. What were the forces at work that impelled craftsmen to make such journeys? What changed in distant lands that provided the opportunity for new products? How were new styles perceived, what made some fashionable, others not? What are these things able to tell us about social habits, demographics, and economic activity? We can begin to see the impact of major political events – the transfer of the Abbasid capital to Baghdad, the decline of Iraq in the tenth century, the rise and then fall of the Fatimids. But we have yet to exploit in detail the surviving bits of history embodied in sherds discarded by the tens of thousands and to incorporate this knowledge with other histories.

There are, however, a number of lessons which we can usefully learn even at this early stage. Firstly is the fact of regular, long-distance movement of potters. We do not know how easy such moves were, or how many were unsuccessful and are unseen, but it remains clear that potters could and did travel. If this was possible for potters then in all likelihood it was for other craftsmen too. We should therefore keep alive this possibility when considering the history of other materials. It entails a difficulty: the transfer of workshops means the transfer of techniques and styles. Is it possible that weavers or metalworkers arrived from different regions east and west to work in, say, Abbasid Iraq, and produced wares differing in technique and style but made in the same place for the same customers? Technique and style alone may be unreliable criteria for distinguishing the products of a region.

Secondly, the story of the arrival of Chinese wares warns us of the difficulties of dealing with "influence." Baxandall (1985: 58–62) taught us many years ago that explanations relying on simple "influence" tend to be simplistic – suggesting that those who copied forms or techniques of foreign derivation were passive recipients, rather than active agents engaging with the potential for innovation that such imports offered. This is amply borne out by the "influence" of Chinese imports. The porcelain pots did not of themselves kick-start a revolution in manufacturing and using fine ceramics, but they were taken up enthusiastically precisely because there already existed a culture into which they fitted. Indeed the Chinese wares were specifically commissioned in order to fit this context. That they had an impact is certain – in the substitution for white rather than yellow as the ground in particular. But they were only able to have this "influence" because the ground was already prepared.

Finally, we are left to wonder what preparation, what change in social habits, material circumstances, and economic activity had taken place in towns and cities from end to end of the Islamic empire to enable the most impressive ceramic phenomenon of all – the universal habit of using fine glazed pottery.

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20

Figural Ornament in Medieval Islamic Art

Oya Pancaroğlu

The historical relationship between the formation of Islam in the early medieval period and the concurrent fate of figural representation is an issue which has not been adequately problematized in the modern study of Islamic art. That this should be so is not too surprising. The unprecedented artistic achievements in calligraphy and abstract ornament have easily persuaded a view of early Islamic art as an essentially aniconic tradition evolving out and away from the rich figural landscape of the ancient world. With no pictorial depiction of religious or mythological narratives, no votive figures, and nearly no room or occasion for public statuary, Islamic cultures of the medieval world have appeared to stand in stark visual contrast to their Christian, Buddhist, or Hindu counterparts with which they were in close historical contact. Given the role of figural representation in the communication of religious narrative and symbolism in nearly all ancient to medieval Mediterranean and Asian societies, the definite and enduring absence of figural depiction from the "sacred art" of Islam is inevitably striking.

When considered in light of the Qurʾan's clear injunction against idolatry (see, e.g., Qurʾan 21: 51–67) as axiomatic of the belief in God's absolute unity and incomparability, the absence of figural images from the contexts of Muslim worship can be understood as a general pious constraint rather than as the product of an intransigent cultural attitude against images. The avoidance of figural representation in the religious ambit of Islam also has a strong echo in the long and convoluted history of images in the monotheistic traditions of the Near East. In ancient Israelite religion, a "*de facto* aniconism" appears to have coexisted with the Near Eastern traditions of anthropomorphism but, by the postexilic period, a clear biblical injunction against the "graven image" had been formulated

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(Mettinger 1997). This position appears to have been in effect through the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE but was relaxed around the third century when figural representation came to be included in synagogue decoration, especially in mosaic pavements. Yet, in the eighth century, a resurgent aniconism defined the decoration of new synagogues while figures were excised from extant mosaic pavements possibly by the Jewish communities themselves (Fine 2000). Anxiety surrounding images in connection with monotheistic worship also triggered the Iconoclastic movement in Byzantium which lasted well over a century between the eighth and ninth centuries and coincided with the rise of Islam.

While medieval adherents of Judaism and Christianity struggled at different times with respect to the exclusion, acceptance, or promotion of figural representation in the context of worship, Muslims were consistent in maintaining an aniconic approach to religious art and architecture. At the same time, however, this Islamic visual praxis coexisted with a lively discourse, starting in the eighth century, on the image of God which issued directly from ample Qurʾanic passages that mention God's attributes such as a face (55: 26), eyes (20: 39, 11: 37), two hands (38: 75, 5: 64), and the state of sitting on a throne (7: 54). These indicators of divine anthropomorphism were balanced against the statement "There is none like Him" (*laysa kamithlihi shayʾ*; 42: 11) which gave rise to what has been termed "transcendent anthropomorphism" (Williams 2009: 28–36). Accordingly, medieval Islamic religious scholars from the eighth to the twelfth centuries generally affirmed God's anthropomorphic attributes but held them to be essentially incomparable or transcendent. In the words of the early Muslim exegete, Muqatil b. Sulayman (d. 767), "God is a body in the form of a man, with flesh, blood, hair and bones. He has limbs and members, including a hand, a foot, a head, and eyes, and He is solid. Nonetheless, He does not resemble anything else, nor does anything resemble Him" (Williams 2009: 35). In approaching the question of images in medieval Islamic thought and culture, it is important to be cognizant of the complexities of interpretation surrounding such compelling acknowledgments of God's anthropomorphic image as well as of semantic ambiguities inherent, for example, in an often discussed "sound" hadith (tradition or saying of the Prophet Muhammad) which asserts that "God created Adam according to his image (*sura*)" (Gimaret 1997: 123–136). The Qur'an made it clear that the act of creating is attributable to God alone, whose exclusive prerogative it was, therefore, to create Adam on the basis of an image (*sura*), divine or not. The word *sura* (form or image) has the same root (*s-w-r*) as the term *musawwir*, literally an "image maker" or a "form giver," which is also a term, among others, used in Arabic for painter or artist. In numerous passages, the Qurʾan employs the related verb form *sawwara* (to fashion or form) in connection with God's act of fashioning or forming, following the act of creation (7: 11, 40: 64). These, along with the fact that *musawwir* is explicitly mentioned in the Qurʾan as an epithet of God (59: 24) and is one of the 99 "beautiful names" of God in Muslim tradition, may be connected to the proliferation of hadith that deal with images.

The evidence of the hadith, however, is difficult to assess because of their rather uneven thematic focus with regard to images, their high incidence of topoi, and the complexity of using them as historical sources in general (Paret 1981: 213–272; van Reenen 1990). Moreover, textual variance from one hadith collection to another also invites skepticism. For example, one well-known hadith where images are mentioned in a negative light begins with the phrase "Angels do not enter a house in which there is/are …" but the remainder of this statement may or may not include a mention of images, depending on which collection is consulted. In fact, out of a total of 14 variants of this hadith given in the major canonical collections, only six make mention of images. Other examples of hadith, which are equally complex in terms of textual variants, seem to be more specific in their contextual significance with clear reference to the Prophet Muhammad's intolerance of images at places of worship such as the Kaʿba or at ritually sensitive locations such as tombs. In yet another well-known hadith example, the cutting up of a curtain fabric decorated with images in order to make pillows is found acceptable by the Prophet, suggesting his disapproval of the conspicuous display of images in the household and his apparent acceptance of their unobtrusive integration rather than ordering their wholesale extermination.

On the whole, it is fairly evident that the canonical hadith on images do constitute a mostly unfavorable case against figural representation, albeit one that contains a significant degree of ambiguity and flexibility. The discourse of the Qurʾan and the hadith left the door wide enough for negative opinions to be expressed by certain Muslim legal scholars and theologians throughout history, but not so wide that these positions were enforced as a matter of rule. Hence a vibrant tradition of figural arts became part and parcel of most medieval Islamic visual cultures, despite occasional outbursts of anti-image discourse and/or action. Nevertheless, influential early scholars of Islamic art in the West have expressed categorically negative interpretations, gratuitously claiming that the hadith are "uniformly hostile to all representations of living form" (Creswell 1946: 161). Others have sensationalized the consequences of an alleged outright ban on images by claiming that "with few exceptions… disregard of the Sacred Law [vis-à-vis figural representation] found expression rather in the interior of the palace than under the public eye … The Muslim monarch, therefore, generally kept his indulgence in forbidden tastes concealed from all except his intimates" (Arnold 1928: 19).

This kind of willful oversimplification has continued to cloud the issue of figural representation in Islamic cultures, which has been further distorted by an apparent disdain for a tradition of figural art that did not participate in the visual expression of belief: "To recapitulate the question whether figurative art is prohibited or tolerated in Islam, we conclude that figurative art can perfectly well be integrated into the universe of Islam provided it does not forget its proper limits, but it will still play only a peripheral role; it will not participate directly in the spiritual economy of Islam" (Burckhardt 2009: 31). Even in an otherwise constructive reading of aniconism in Islamic art, the conclusion declaimed that "[t]o the extent [Islamic art] has figural representations, they are either artistically subordinate to the rest of the decoration, whatever their meaning, or tied to specific linguistic traditions, such as the illustrations of the *Shâhnâmah*" (Allen 1988: 37).

A common thread in much of the historiography of Islamic art is that figural arts are to be treated as a phenomenon occurring against the odds, an artistic self-indulgence privately mushrooming in the shadow of the nonfigural arts and architecture deemed to be proper to Islam. Recognizing such historiographic deformations is important for unburdening the issue of figural representation in Islamic cultures. A fresh start on the topic requires an approach released as much as possible from the weight of earlier art historical and ideological agendas. This chapter is focused especially on the trajectory of figural ornament on objects and architecture between the seventh and thirteenth centuries and, more briefly, on figural representation as it concurrently developed within the domain of manuscript illustration.

The adaptation of Sasanian and Byzantine imperial imagery on Umayyad coinage of the late seventh century may be considered as the first milestone in any survey of Islamic figural representation. Accompanied by Arabic inscriptions proclaiming the religion of Islam, these coin series, which included the brief introduction of new figural types such as a figure generally identified as the Standing Caliph, constituted a remarkable abutment of continuity and change and of imperial ambition and religious proclamation (see Treadwell, CHAPTER 3). Such juxtapositions were clearly meaningful within the cultural framework of conquest but perhaps less so in the establishment of a state identity which came about with the Umayyad administrative and monetary reforms of the late seventh century when experiments with figural representation were eventually rejected in favor of a strictly epigraphic coinage. Although coinage was reconceived to assert a religious identity by means of writing alone, figural representation continued to be employed in other media to project the image of kingship in the Umayyad period and beyond.

Figural representation was allocated a notable place in the decoration of the Umayyad countryside palaces in Syria and Palestine, with freestanding statues as well as paintings and stucco carvings covering large swathes of architectural surface. At the mid-eighth-century palace-complex of Khirbat al-Mafjar, for example, the plaster statue of a princely figure – reminiscent of the Standing Caliph on the pre-epigraphic coinage – stood on a lion pedestal and occupied a prominent position above the entrance to the monumental bath hall. Inside the entrance, the architecture of the vestibule was highlighted with androgynous figures holding up the base of the dome lined with animal figures. This sculptural ensemble has been interpreted as a possible representation of the legend of Solomon (Soucek 1993). At Qusayr ʿAmra, a smaller Umayyad royal bath hall of the early eighth century, all of the interior walls were painted with figural subjects which represent both a continuity with and fusion of late antique themes of power and pleasure, culminating in a celestial dome featuring classical personifications of the zodiac (Fowden 2004).

Nearly all surviving medieval Islamic palaces in the subsequent periods have furnished, albeit patchily, some amount of evidence for the incorporation of figural imagery into architectural decoration. Fragments of wall-paintings with dancers and hunters from the ninth-century caliphal palace in Samarra confirm that similar conventions applied in the capital of the Abbasid caliphate, although these are too fragmentary to give a complete sense of any extensive figural program (Hoffman 2008; Redford and Hoffman, CHAPTER 17). Figural representation was also afforded a prominent and public place in the Round City of Baghdad, which was the first Abbasid royal city project. Medieval sources have recorded that a wind vane in the form of an equestrian figure holding a lance surmounted the dome of the caliphal palace located at the center of the city (Lassner 1970: 52–54). As the highest feature in the city, its visibility was ensured and its lance was said to point in the direction of would-be enemies. As a wind vane, this horseman atop Baghdad was probably inspired by classical examples, such as the bronze statue of Triton holding a rod in his hand, which is known to have functioned as a weather vane on top of the Tower of the Winds (first century BCE) in Athens (Noble *et al.* 1968).

The figural decoration of Umayyad and Abbasid palaces can be considered as emerging out of late antique traditions of figural representation, reworked as "individual, local translations of these traditions" (Hoffman 2008: 119) and not designed to be entirely private affairs, since palaces were sites for audiences and elite entertainment. Palace decoration in the eleventh century continued to employ figural representation. The eastern Iranian traveler, Nasir-i Khusraw, who visited the Fatimid palace in Cairo in 440 (1049) mentioned scenes of hunting and battle combined with a calligraphic inscription on a gold background as the decoration of a throne platform (Nasir-i Khusraw 2008: 56–57). These images appear to have been executed on a relatively large scale – Nasir-i Khusraw gives a height of 4 ells – and were probably either painted, or carved and painted. His visit to the palace coincided with the celebration of the feast at the end of Ramadan, on which occasion the Fatimid caliph hosted both the elite and the commoners. Among the offerings of the banquet that Nasir-i Khusraw observed were thousands of confectionaries in the form of trees and figurines, presumably both animal and human, ready for distribution. The amusement element inherent in the festive display of these edible figures is indicative of the existence of a category of images that was readily consumable and evidently taken for granted. More evidence for this type of figural representation and its pervasiveness can be seen in the archaeological record where, for example, objects such as bone "dolls" – found in numerous sites from eastern Iran to the eastern Mediterranean, including Egypt – show that figural objects were part and parcel of everyday life between the ninth and eleventh centuries and perhaps even later (Evans *et al.* 2012: 193–195) (Figure 20.1). Whether these so-called dolls were children's play items or

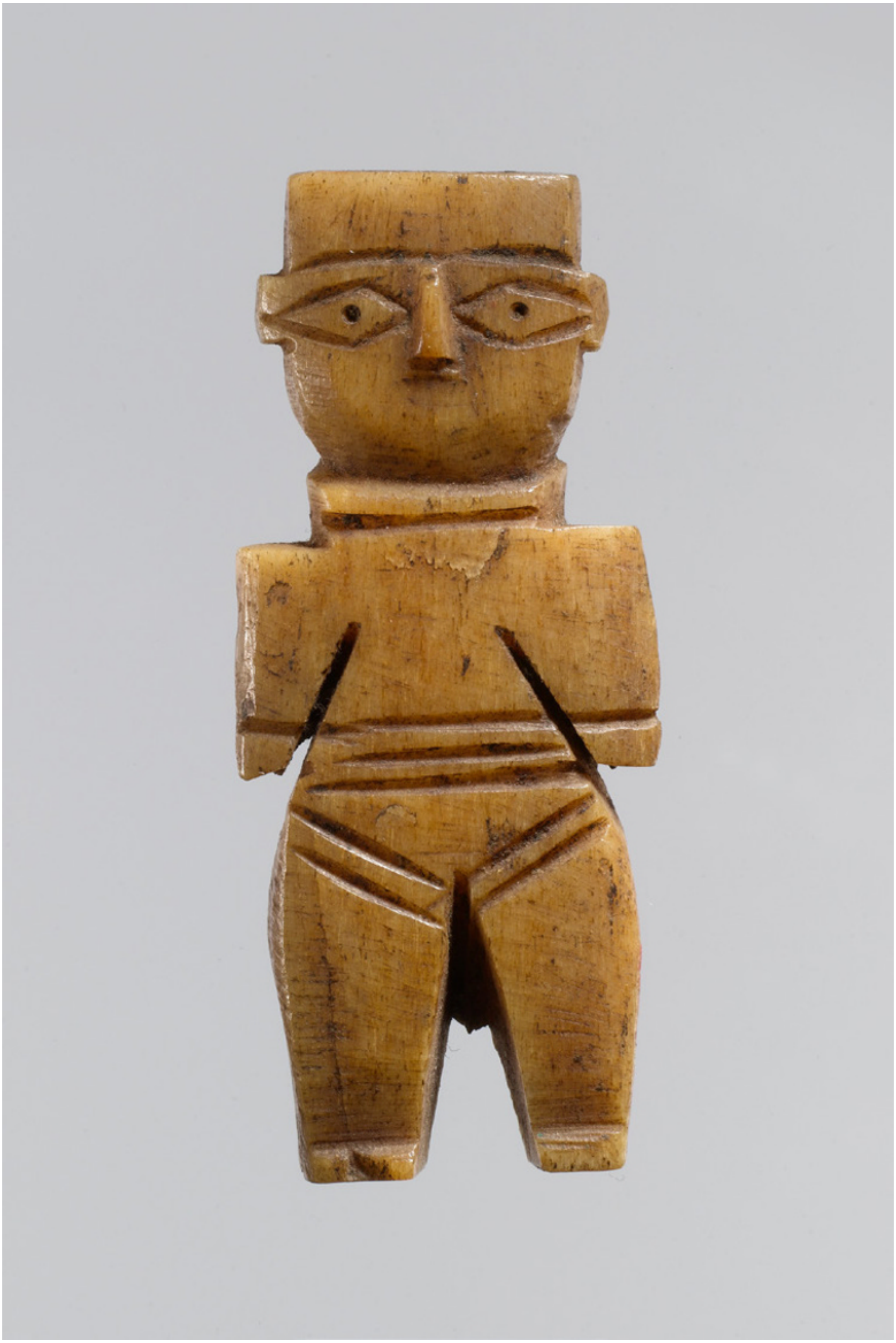

Figure 20.1 Bone "doll," probably Egypt, eighth–tenth century. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 21.6.107; Gift of Lily S. Place, 1921.

fulfilled some other function, possibly as amulets, remains unknown but, in any case, they point to the mostly unrecognized fact that figural representation in the medieval Islamic period was neither the exclusive purview of the privileged classes alone nor simply the stuff of "high art" enjoyed in the private.

Nasir-i Khusraw mentioned these two instances of figural representation in the Fatimid palace – the throne platform decoration and the confectionaries – mainly because they amazed him with their dimension or quantity. Although it is difficult to speculate about a figural program as such on the basis of his rather sketchy testimony, it is reasonable to suppose that the Fatimid palace was embellished with different and impressive forms of figural art. More details on the figural decoration of the Fatimid palace can be gleaned from surviving carved wooden ceiling beams (today preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo) which were discovered to have been reused in a Mamluk period building erected on the former royal site of the Western Palace (Barrucand 1998: 88–90; see Anderson and Pruitt, CHAPTER 9). These beams are decorated with cartouches containing hunting scenes as well as musicians, dancers, cupbearers, and hunters on foot or horseback. Such images can be described as visual abridgements which typically condense the concept of entertainment or pleasure into "bite-size" pictures or "vignettes" made up of one or two human figures engaged in a readily recognizable activity. The conciseness of the compositions and the geometry of the framing cartouches accentuate their thematic unity, rendering them eminently suitable as repeated units of decoration. This serial visual characteristic is also suggested by later medieval descriptions of ninth- to twelfth-century Cairene palaces mentioning special rooms decorated with portrait series of female entertainers and famous poets (Milwright 2010–2011: 76).

Nasir-i Khusraw boasted that, before his arrival in Cairo, he had seen the great Ghaznavid palaces in what is now eastern Iran and Afghanistan, a claim which supposedly gained him access to the Fatimid palace for purposes of comparison. In the event, his account does not include an actual comparison between Fatimid and Ghaznavid palaces, but it is likely that the type of figural decoration he encountered in Cairo was not too different from what he may have seen in the east. Of the figural decoration of the Palace of Lashkari Bazar (today in southern Afghanistan) built by Sultan Mahmud in the early eleventh century, only a portion of a wall-painting was recovered (Schlumberger 1952). The series of 44 nearly life-size standing courtly attendants or guardians in the surviving portion of the painting tally with descriptions of contemporary Ghaznavid ceremonial processions in the court when guards lined up along walls in large numbers. Numerous marble panels carved in low relief with abridged imagery similar in subject and composition to those on the Fatimid wooden beams with standing and horseback figures, as well as images of musicians and dancers, have been found in the capital Ghazni and may well have decorated not only the palace but also other residences there (Bombaci 1959; Rugiadi 2007).

Thus, it may be postulated that by the eleventh and twelfth centuries figural representation had a clearly defined presence in the palatial context and probably similar figural decorative schemes were also enjoyed by the subroyal segments of society. For the most part, the images were autonomous or serialized "units" of decoration that encapsulated elements of the courtly lifestyle. The purpose of the images appears to be a sort of thematic reflexivity between the subject of decoration and the actual or ideal privileges of the occupants of the decorated space. This kind of encapsulated and reflexive imagery continued to hold sway in palace decoration well into the early thirteenth century in places as distant from each other as the Seljuq palaces at Konya and Kubadabad (Arık 2000) in west-central Anatolia, dated to the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries respectively, and the Qarakhanid palace at Samarqand (Karev 2003) from the early thirteenth century. This preference for reflexivity appears to have largely excluded specific or narrative imagery, opting instead for visual algorithms that produced standard and simple iconographies and, significantly, did not necessarily depend on the palace context for meaning.

Images of figures engaged in activities such as drinking or music-making had become part of the decorative repertoire not only of buildings but also objects, appearing especially on ninth- and tenth-century ceramics from Abbasid Iraq (Figure 20.2). These ceramic vessels were in demand especially for their highly innovative decorative techniques involving opaque white glazed surfaces, densely overpainted with metallic compounds that created a lustrous optical quality, and are known to have been traded widely within and beyond the Islamic world (Grube 1976; see Watson, CHAPTER 19). Imitations of these so-called luster-painted ceramics in eastern Iran were produced with locally available decorative techniques while replicating the subject and style of the Iraqi originals for the local market. When luster painting technology was subsequently established in Fatimid Egypt, probably around the end of the tenth century, the same stock imagery of cupbearers, musicians, dancers, and riders once again constituted a significant portion of the figural repertoire.

Although these ceramic vessels appear to have circulated in both palatial and nonpalatial contexts, unfortunately almost nothing is known about the particular social contexts for which they were produced. This lack of knowledge is only exacerbated by the dearth of archaeological data about the objects' provenance. Nevertheless, noting regional variations on the subject matter of ceramic decoration reveals that, despite the prevalence of the stock imagery, the impetus for figural representation assured a dynamically evolving repertoire in which the standard iconographies coexisted with what appear, in comparison, to be novel depictions. This is seen especially in a type of glazed ceramic from eastern Iran, known commonly as "Nishapur buff ware," on which images such as wrestlers or dancers with animal masks suggest that depictions of local festive customs contributed to the expansion of the image repertoire (Pancaroğlu 2013) (Figure 20.3). A similar situation can be observed in Fatimid luster-painted

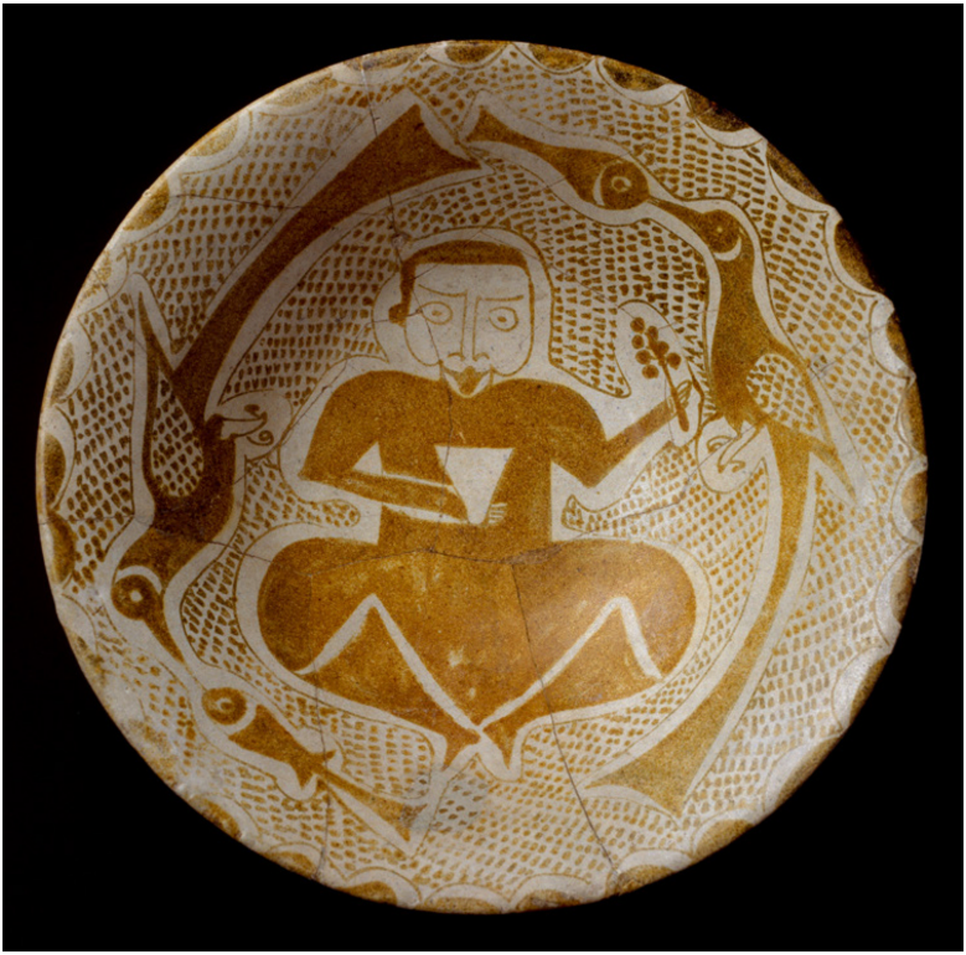

Figure 20.2 Luster-painted ceramic bowl with figure holding a cup, Iraq, tenth century. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1977.126; Gift of Edwin Binney 3rd and Purchase, Richard S. Perkins Gift, 1977.

ceramics where the occurrence of particular images such as sleeve dancers, cockfighters, or exotic animal keepers has been explained in connection with local customs, ceremonies, and literary interests (Suleman 2003).

Peripatetic and mutually combinable, aspects of figural compositions in the medieval Islamic world may have evoked actual social contexts but were not limited or strictly defined by any particular one. In other words, the general scarcity of narrativity and specificity as well as the discrete, unit-like conceptualization of figural depictions rendered figural imagery open to new applications and arrangements which retained a familiar or "classical" appearance but did not become outdated, irrelevant, or incomprehensible. The endurance of an image such as the single seated figure holding a drinking cup or playing an instrument, which can

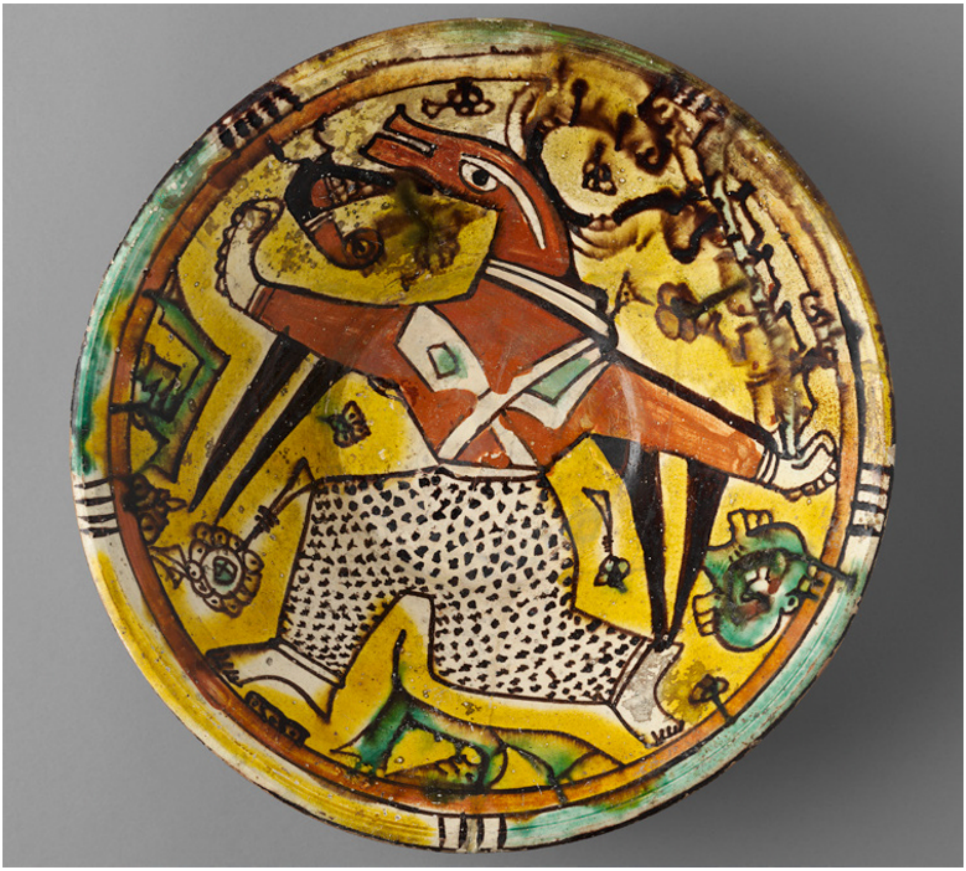

Figure 20.3 Polychrome glazed ceramic bowl with bull-masked dancer, eastern Iran, tenth–eleventh century. Source: Harvard Art Museums, 2002.50.49; The Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art. Reproduced with permission.

be seen in nearly all manifestations of Islamic art between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, may be explained in terms of the image's instant contextual applicability balanced against its immutable signification of basic conviviality. Thus, while their ubiquity and generic appearance might be interpreted as indications of minimal meaning, it was their potential reflexivity in contexts such as banquets that must have assured their visual value as they migrated from walls to bowls to furniture. Interacting with life as it happened or was projected to happen, any single figural image functioned as both an autonomous unit of decoration and as an element in a serial composition with other figures as well as, quite frequently, abstract nonfigural ornament and writing.

Not all figural imagery of the medieval Islamic world was generic in nature, revolving around a set iconographic array. Some examples were also deployed in the service of private or personal intentions with more specific concerns.

A significant example of this can be observed on the carved ivory object known as the Pyxis of al-Mughira (Louvre Museum) from Islamic Spain. The inscription on the lid of this small container provides the date of 357 (967–968) and good wishes for its recipient, the prince al-Mughira, who was the younger brother of the reigning Umayyad caliph of al-Andalus, al-Hakam II. The decoration on the body of the pyxis consists of four large medallions containing figural scenes, around which a dense matrix of vegetal decoration contains further figural elements, both human and animal. The four framed scenes are distinguished in the first instance by their dual composition of nearly mirror-image figures on either side of a central axis. Two of the scenes are iconographically fairly evident: one containing a double image of a lion attacking a bull and the other a courtly scene of two seated princely figures serenaded by a standing lute player in their midst. These two medallions may be interpreted as representations of royal power and privilege, respectively. The remaining two scenes, however, are iconographically unusual, even enigmatic. Of these, one features two equestrian figures picking dates from a palm while a cheetah is seated on the back of the horse, indicating a hunting aspect. The other scene depicts two standing figures reaching out to remove eggs from falcon nests while a dog is pulling them back by biting on their ankles. These two scenes have been the subject of a lively debate, proffering contextualized theories that take into account either particular political circumstances of the period and thereby reading a cautionary message of subordination and intimidation directed at al-Mughira (Prado-Vilar 2005) or more general observations about particular aspects of legitimacy and power in the Umayyad caliphate of al-Andalus and suggesting that the pyxis may commemorate al-Mughira's coming of age (Makariou 2010).

What is clear from this debate is that the decoration of the pyxis was conceived with recourse to both standard and specific imagery. In the latter category, the deployment of particular images such as a palm tree laden with dates or a falcon can be encountered in contemporary literature produced for the Umayyad court, but their precise signification on the pyxis has not been easy to resolve. Nevertheless, it is understood that the pyxis was probably conceived for an environment in which literary and visual imagery overlapped, interacting in turn with courtly or other sociopolitical contexts in which the object's presentation was embedded. Other contemporary carved ivory objects from Islamic Spain, such as the so-called Pamplona casket, a large rectangular box made in 1004–1005, display a similar approach to constructing a particular figural program contained within medallions, which acquires specific connotations when read in its particular courtly, political, and literary context: "These objects make use of figure types, postures and combinations that might, in other cases, be intended to bear no particular meaning at all. In these cases, however – once the political circumstances have been taken into consideration – the motifs achieve specific and directed significance" (Robinson 2007a: 100–101).

The use of framing devices such as the lobed medallions on the Pyxis of al-Mughira and the Pamplona casket or the cartouches on the Fatimid palace wooden beams was a very common feature of figural art throughout the medieval Islamic period. Although such frames may at first seem to serve the purpose of creating discrete units which are physically detached from each other and thereby to emphasize the ornamental aspect of the image, they may also be understood to function as a kind of distilling mechanism which helps to concentrate the meanings and associations relatable to any single image. The semantically concentrated image within the frame thus opens up the possibility of extended formal and metaphorical associations. Framing devices also defined some of the more popular literary works of the medieval Islamic period, most notably the fables of *Kalila and Dimna*, named after the brother jackals whose adventures provide the initial framing narrative. These animal fables of Indian origin were adapted into Middle Persian in the sixth century as a Sasanian imperial project and translated into Arabic in the middle of the eighth century by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (Riedel and O'Kane 2010). The latter's translation preserved the concept of a "frame tale" in the form of an Indian king asking a philosopher to illuminate a particular issue related to statecraft. Each story in the collection – analogous to a framed scene on an object or a building – thus starts with the king acknowledging the moral of the previous story and requesting to hear another story on another topic. Within each story, the framing strategy gives way to nested stories introduced by a variety of characters. This storytelling framework establishes the objective of the collection of stories to teach about statecraft and intrigue and achieves a moralistic unity, conceptually linking up otherwise discrete stories.

The visual and semantic possibilities created by the use of framing devices may perhaps also explain why the *Kalila and Dimna* became not only one of the most popular literary works but also one of the most frequently illustrated texts in the medieval Islamic period, especially starting in the fourteenth century. Although there is no surviving illustrated copy of the work earlier than the thirteenth century, both Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's own introduction and a later reference to the poet Rudaki's tenth-century Persian verse translation clearly mention pictures as part and parcel of the didactic and entertainment value of this work. The tradition of illustrations associated with these fables has been traced to pre-Islamic Central Asia, as early as the late sixth century (Raby 1987–1988). There is no doubt that many stories of the *Kalila and Dimna* featuring both animals and humans also circulated orally and were instantly recognizable even when quoted in an abbreviated manner in other literary works. Similarly, it has been suggested that two of the medallions of the Pyxis of al-Mughira – the lion attacking the bull and the palm tree scene – quote well-known stories from these fables to lend a moralizing aspect to the decoration (Prado-Vilar 2005: 143–149). The depiction of a lion and a hare together with an inscription containing a partially read moralizing message on a Fatimid luster bowl from Egypt has also been read as a visual quotation from the *Kalila and Dimna* (Suleman 2003: 161–174), further supporting the potential of concentrated meaning inherent in the encapsulated and framed image.

Just as popular as the *Kalila and Dimna* as an illustrated text were the short stories of the *Maqamat*, written in Arabic by al-Hariri around the turn of the twelfth century (George 2012; Roxburgh 2013; see Tabbaa, CHAPTER 12 and Contadini, CHAPTER 17). Of the more than a dozen surviving illustrated copies of the work produced between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, only one seems to have been made for a specific patron, suggesting that the majority of the manuscripts were intended to be sold on the book market. The 50 stories in al-Hariri's *Maqamat* do not actually have a frame tale of the type that unifies the *Kalila and Dimna* stories into a moralistic whole. However, all stories relate the exploits of one trickster character named Abu Zayd, whose various adventures in social manipulation for his own benefit – achieved thanks to his exceptional talent for verbal persuasion – are witnessed in every single story by the same unsuspecting character named al-Harith. Moreover, each story of the *Maqamat* is set in a different city or geographic location for no apparent reason – at least none that appears to be related to the plot – than, it seems, to lend just enough of a sense of unit-like discreteness to the stories. These constant elements in the *Maqamat* stories could be said to function as an internalized framing device of sorts, which was probably made more apparent in the popular oral performances of the text and in the employment of a set array of compositional devices in the illustrations, often reminiscent of the framed images seen on other media. Thus, what has been often perceived as a kind of narrative repetitiveness in the *Maqamat* can perhaps be re-evaluated as a cultural tendency toward "framed" elements, the serial juxtaposition of which, in word and pictures, may suggest apposite conceptual associations to the reader or listener. Indeed, one of the perennial scholarly questions about the *Maqamat* has been why such a repetitive sequence of stories in which action is only a minor part of the narrative became the object of frequent illustration. While a definitive answer to this question requires further deliberation, considering the *Maqamat*'s illustrative popularity in the light of wider medieval Islamic visual and literary choices may be worthwhile.

Compared to the *Kalila and Dimna* and the *Maqamat*, of which numerous illustrated copies survive from the thirteenth century onward, extant illustrated manuscripts of literary works which consist of a single continuous narrative are rare before the fourteenth century, which is probably indicative of low levels of production in this category. Only two surviving examples of a literary work with a single continuous narrative, both of them romances surviving in unique copies, are known from the thirteenth century. One of these is an anonymous Arabic prose work known by the title *Hadith Bayad wa Riyad* (The Story of Bayad and Riyad, Vatican Library, Vat. Ar. Ris. 386), probably produced in Spain (Robinson 2007b). The other, known as *Varqa and Gulshah* (Topkapı Palace Library, H. 841), is a Persian romance composed by the eleventh-century poet ʿAyyuqi from eastern Iran (Melikian-Chirvani 1970); the illustrated copy was probably produced in Anatolia. The extant paintings in both manuscripts include numerous scenes featuring social interactions in which a couple or more figures are depicted in relatively simple and balanced compositions featuring buildings, vegetation, or tents that succinctly communicate the settings to the viewer/reader. In the *Hadith Bayad wa Riyad* especially, the courtly subject of the story comes alive in scenes where a musical audience is depicted. The highly action-packed narrative of the *Varqa and Gulshah*, on the other hand, is reflected in various battle scenes featuring horses and their riders engaged in combat. In nearly all of these compositions, there is a certain kinship to the typically more abbreviated and framed images seen on architecture and objects discussed earlier. It must be said that the illustrations of these two manuscripts are not without drama – which is of course a requirement of the nature of the narrative they are linked to – but this is most commonly conveyed by a visual intensification of the number of figures involved or an indication of the alteration of the physical condition of the figures such as injury or fainting. While it would be inaccurate to see these illustrations as stock images, it is nonetheless evident that many of them display a sustained visual affinity to the wider culture of image-making, beyond narrativity and beyond book illustration.

The wider world of medieval Islamic cultures of image-making frequently also incorporated some acknowledgment of the pre-Islamic past. This is most evident in a discourse which developed around ancient statues and other images known or reported to exist within and beyond the Islamic world (Flood 2010; Pancaroğlu 2003). Though alien and fascinating, such works as statues in Constantinople or the Buddhas of Bamiyan were nonetheless reframed within an Islamic aura, described either as testimony to God's will in giving humans the inspiration and skill to craft such extraordinary works, or as talismanic images which mark the line between belief and disbelief and recurrently portend the expected victory of Islam. This kind of attitude toward the ancient image is perhaps best epitomized in the rebuilding of the walls of Konya, in the 1220s when reliefs and statues of Greco-Roman antiquity were conspicuously displayed as spolia together with inscriptions of passages from the Qurʾan, the Persian national epic of the *Shahnama*, and selections of wise sayings, thus setting up a verbal–visual proclamation about the timeless authority of the Seljuq dynasty in Anatolia (Redford 1993; Yalman 2012). In such instances of referencing the past, it is possible to detect the acculturation of the once alien image, whether in legend or in translation. The reintroduction of figural copper coinage in the middle of the twelfth century by the newly established Turkic dynasties of the Jazira, Syria, and Anatolia – an admittedly complex phenomenon which is still not very well understood – with images drawn largely from a wide variety of antique sources (Whelan 2006) may have been motivated by a similar perspective on the value of ancient imagery as a legitimizing force. Such a perspective on the ancient image could also be considered as an extended legacy of the Abbasid translation movement which established classical Greco-Roman learning – and its associated imagery such as personifications of the constellations (Figure 20.4) or portraits of scholars (Hoffman 1993, 2000; Touwaide 1997) – as an authoritative component of intellectual practice and its sociopolitical patronage.

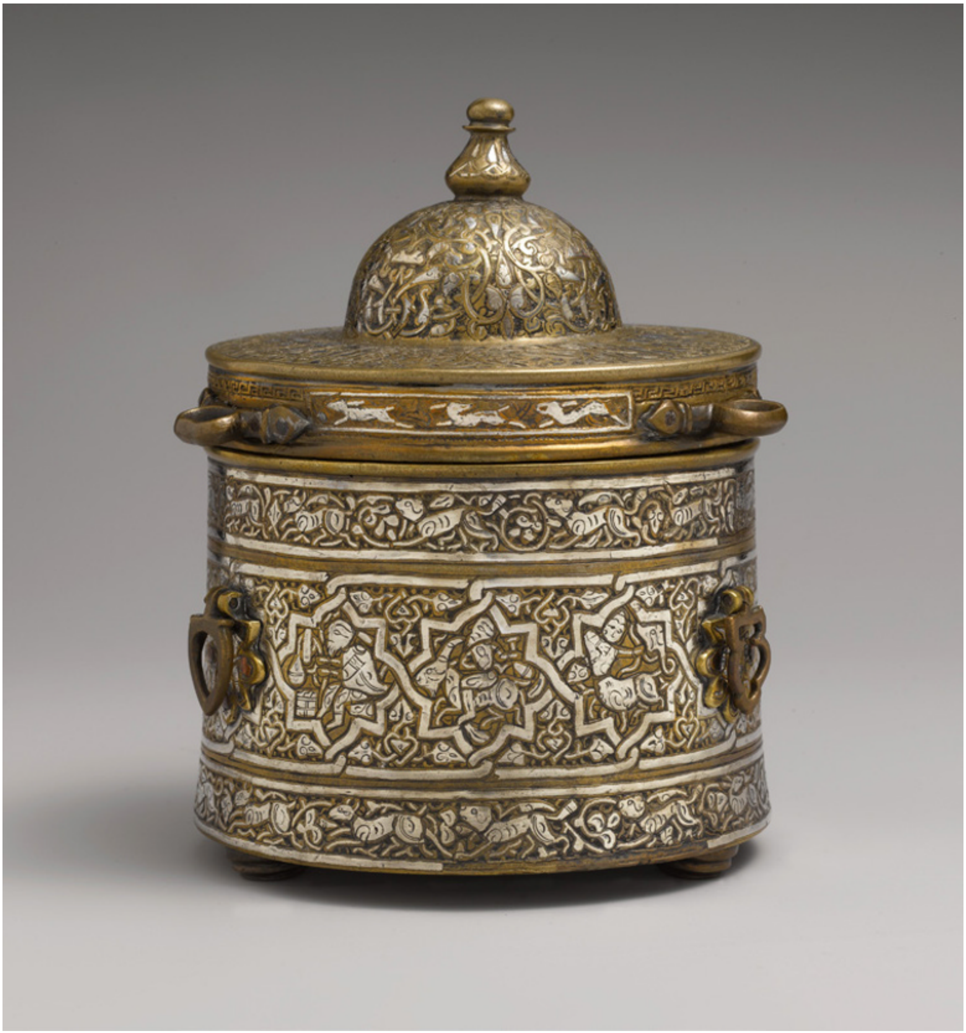

Figure 20.4 Inlaid bronze inkwell with signs of the zodiac, Iran, early thirteenth century. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 59.69.2,a;b; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1959.

Looking broadly into artistic production in the later decades of the twelfth century, it is evident that a cultural and artistic shift had occurred which not only cultivated ancient imagery as an authoritative force but also gave impetus, especially in the eastern Islamic world, to innovations in figural representation concerned with ethical notions (Pancaroğlu 2000). This ethical shift can be observed on a variety of media starting as early as the mid-twelfth century and gave rise to a period of about a hundred years during which figural representation acquired both greater presence and new strands of meaning as well as a new style. The reasons for this shift appear to be manifold and complex and, while some of the incentive can be linked to earlier developments in figural art, a cohesive explanation accounting for all novel conceptualizations of the human image between the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries is a complicated, and perhaps impossible, matter. One of the keys to recognizing this transformation is the development of figural compositions that are concerned with not only reflexivity, as before, but also reflectivity. In a subtle but important change from the established pictorial reflexivity – consisting of images of musicians, cupbearers, dancers, guardsmen, or horsemen on buildings and objects reproducing the essential components of actual or idealized social settings in which they appear – we also see an emphasis on reflectivity, a quality where pictorial compositions invite not only the recognition but also reflection by the viewer, who, furthermore, can also be implicated in the composition.

This development is most palpable in Iranian ceramic decoration starting in the second half of the twelfth century when Persian poetry, typically on the topic of love, began to be inscribed on vessels and tiles. In some cases, inscriptions and abstract nonfigural ornament constitute the totality of the decoration but in others inscriptions were combined in compositions including figural representation. This combination of text and image requires the viewer not only to perceive the image but also to read the poetic inscription and to reflect on more than the sum of the visual–textual composition (Pancaroğlu 2000: 163–178; 2012). The majority of the inscribed love poetry takes the form of the epigrammatic quatrains and often three or more quatrains are inscribed on a single object such as a bowl, commonly placed around the rim to circumscribe the image. In these quatrains, the voice of the poet is also the voice of the lover, whose quest for the beloved is often also a quest for self-knowledge, culminating, through the dramatic sequencing of the chosen quatrains, in the lover maintaining his loyal devotion and ultimately accepting and making peace with the pains of love and sublimating his grief into the virtue of self-awareness.

The tenor of such verses may seem to be in harmony with images that depict seated couples, which started to proliferate in the latter decades of the twelfth century. In other images such as enthroned princely figures and warriors or hunters on horseback, the relationship seems less evident at first (Figure 20.5). However, the virtues of loyalty, valiance, devotion, and patience which encapsulate the ethical values conveyed in the love poetry can effectively be applied to notions of heroism or justice evoked respectively by images of equestrian figures and kings. The same may be said for the limited but striking repertoire of images that allude to narratives of heroism (Simpson 1985). Recognizing this correspondence of concepts between text and image brings the composition into greater focus by means of reflection.

Asked to give a paper on the topic of "Islam and Image" at the 1962 conference of the American Society for the Study of Religion, Marshall G.S. Hodgson, one

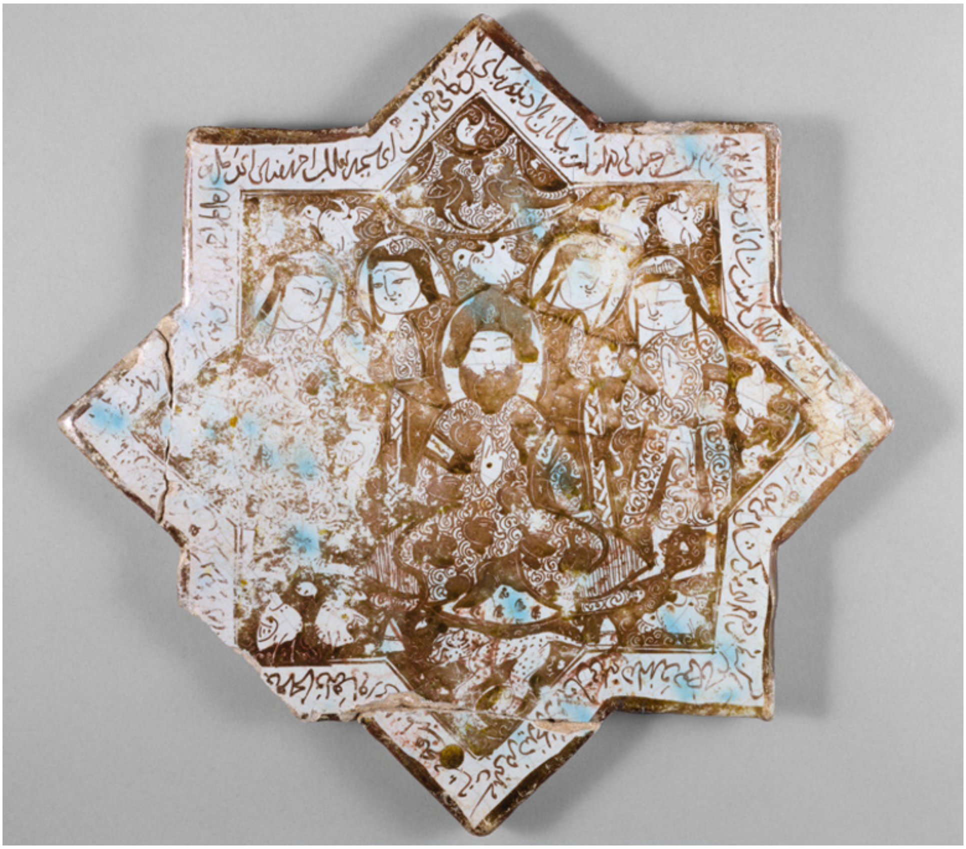

FIGURE 20.5 Luster-painted ceramic tile with enthronement scene and poetic inscriptions, Iran, 1211–1212. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 40.181.1; H.O. Havemeyer Collection; Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1940.

of the most influential scholars of Islamic history and culture, aptly criticized the diagnostic negativity prevailing in the Western scholarship at large:

> Islâmic culture is almost regularly characterized by what it did *not* have. The culture did not have true feudalism, did not have municipalities; the faith did not have priests, did not have dramatic myths. The committee that asked me for this paper brought up the classic case: Islâm's iconoclasm. Why the resistance to visual images, and what may have been substituted for them? The question is perfectly friendly, but it leads us directly to the perplexing point. (Hodgson 1964: 224)

As befits a pioneering scholar of world history who successfully challenged the Eurocentricism of his discipline, Hodgson deployed his knowledge and understanding of the intellectual–religious forces which shaped Islamic societies and concluded that at the heart of the matter lay "a moralistic devotion to a single image which excluded rivals" so that "neither in formal religious institutions nor in any other public channel could the visional-symbolic work of the mind find the conditions of a stable and public cultivation" (Hodgson 1964: 257–258). This normative conclusion, reached without recourse to any example of figural or non-figural art, ultimately remained as an esoteric exercise in the history of ideas, later finding its place within Hodgson's posthumously published three-volume *magnum opus*, *The Venture of Islam*. The response to this exercise was given by Hodgson's peer, Oleg Grabar, whose thoughts on the paper were liberally incorporated as notes to the published article. In the very last note, Grabar delivered his challenge: "Here are objects and monuments identifiable in time and space; they have analyzable characteristics; how were they seen? Why were they made? Thus we reverse the process and go from "things" to ideas rather than to look in "things" for a confirmation of ideas" (Hodgson 1964: 260).

In the decades following Hodgson's article and Grabar's challenge, much work has been put forward in understanding various aspects of Islamic figural arts. Still, however, the question of figural representation in Islamic art needs to be more widely recognized as "many things" leading to "many ideas" and to be released from the weight of a single notion about permissibility constricting all other possible notions.

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21

Medieval Islamic Amulets, Talismans, and Magic

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Emilie Savage-Smith

Magical designs are to be found on virtually every medium of material culture, including metalwork, objects carved of wood, cloth, and jewelry. Their presence highlights beliefs and practices prevalent to different degrees throughout the Islamic world, expounded by the authors of a variety of treatises devoted to magic. While the roots of many of the designs and symbols are to be found in early medieval Islam, the nature of these practices means that the same symbols continue to be used in much the same way on "magical" objects today. The chapter will begin with a brief discussion of what the term "magic" refers to within the context of Islam, then will consider aspects of the magical literature where theories of magic and its uses are put forward, before proceeding to discuss the elements of what can be termed a "magical vocabulary" and to examine traces of the magical theories preserved in medieval and some later artifacts.

What is Magic?

Magic and its traditional place in Muslim societies has most succinctly been described by Michael Dolls as "a more forceful method of supplication or a super-charged prayer" (Dols 2004: 87). There is of course good and bad magic practiced by different kinds of magicians. Licit magicians are regarded as being able to constrain the spirits by supplicating God, while illicit magicians enslave the demonic spirits and are able to enact evil deeds. Over time there has been wide-ranging debate over what is or what is not allowable in Islam. The tenth-century

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Epistles of the Brethren of Purity, known as Ikhwan al-Safaʾ, discussed below, for example, included a polemical treatise against those who dismiss magic and oppose the "science of talismans" – that is, the use of materials, particularly metals and plants, that possess certain useful properties hidden from human understanding but evident in their effect on other creatures. To justify their advocacy of astral magic and talismans, the anonymous authors provide a history of attitudes towards magic (Ikhwan al-Safaʾ 2011). Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) was also concerned with magical practices and believed that human beings had the ability to influence the "world of elements" through supernatural means: "These are sciences showing how human souls may become prepared to exercise an influence upon the world of the elements, either without any aid or with the aid of celestial matters" (Asatrian 2003: 94). In the case of such practices today, there is a wide discrepancy across the Islamic world on its acceptability, much of which depends on which strand of Islam is being followed.[1]

The Literature on Magic

The regional diversity of magical practices, the involvement of the operator's intuition, and even charlatanism, make it very difficult to ascertain specific textual sources employed for the construction of individual amulets and talismans preserved today. Nonetheless, the majority of the magical vocabulary visible on talismans and other objects, old and modern, can be found in the medieval literature on magic.

The following are key texts composed in the medieval Islamic period which have direct relevance to talismanic practices. These texts were particularly influential and circulated widely; they contain magical elements in the form of descriptions of amulets or instructions on what to inscribe upon them, sometimes accompanied by illustrations, the designs of which are reflected on surviving talismans.

The Pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica

The pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica is a corpus comprising a number of texts that take the form of epistles and conversations between Aristotle and Alexander the Great. In them, Aristotle, based on knowledge he received from Hermes Trismegistus, instructs his royal pupil on the ways in which one may gain power from the universe, the spiritual forces that flow in it – called *ruhaniyyat* – and occult properties in natural things. Each of these texts is given strange Greek-sounding titles.[2] For example, the *Istimakhis* gives instructions for making four talismans and four amulets (*khirz*) intended to ensure military success. The *Istimatis* provides names of planetary *ruhaniyyat* that are to be called upon in various magical operations. The *Hadhitus* contains descriptions of various concoctions made from natural ingredients (*nairanjat*) to attract lovers or cause hatred. Other texts include instructions for making rings.[3] For example, one can make a ring which utilizes the power of the planet Mars: when Mars is in the sixth degree of Scorpio and the moon is in the eighth degree of Cancer, the form of a crowned man holding a sword is engraved on the stone, surrounded by specific magical characters. It must be set on a copper ring over which a black ram is slaughtered. Then it should be suffumigated at the beginning of the day and at the end of the night. This ring ensures victory and heals the cursed, the insane, and the sick.[4]

The dating of the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica is not clear, but some of its constituent texts were cited in *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* (The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity), whose *terminus ante quem* is 937, and in *Ghayat al hakim* (The Goal of the Sage), which was written in the 950s.[5] Both texts are discussed below.

These texts were very influential and seem to be an important source for many later texts on magical practice, determining the forms of magic practiced in the Islamic medieval world and later. Ibn Abi Usaibiʿa (1203–1270) mentions the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica in his *ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fī Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ* (Major Accounts on the Classes of Physicians).[6] In the seventeenth century, Katip Çelebi (Hajji Khalifa) (1609–1657) lists in his *Kashf al-zunun* (The Removal of Doubts) "The Epistles of Aristotle to Alexander on governance and magic."[7]

The Goal of the Sage (Ghayat al-hakim) or the Picatrix

The Goal of the Sage has been described as the standard text on astrological magic and one of the most sophisticated expositions on magic (Kahane, Kahane, and Pietrangeli 1966: 574; Pingree 1980: 1). This work is a compendium, written in the 950s, containing a description of practices from diverse sources: Hermetic (namely, the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica), Indic, Greek, and more (Boudet 2011: 161). It was attributed erroneously to the astronomer and mathematician Maslama al-Majriti (d. *c.* 1008). This attribution is made in the *Prolegomena* (*Muqaddima*) of ʿAbd al-Rahman b. Muhammad Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), who considers it representative of talismanic magic (Asatrian 2003: 97–99; Ibn Khaldin 2000: 483, 507). Maribel Fierro (1996) compellingly argues for the attribution of this text to the Muslim *ʿalim* and reputed occultist Abu al-Qasim Maslama al-Qurtubi.[8] *The Goal of the Sage* was translated from Arabic into Castillian under the patronage of Alfonso the Wise sometime between 1256 and 1258, and shortly afterwards it was rendered into the Latin version now known in the West as the *Picatrix*. Its wide reception is evident in the high number of extant manuscripts (Pingree 1986: xvi–xxiii). The magic of *The Goal of the Sage* is based on the knowledge of correspondences – that is, the rules of sympathy or antipathy among animals, plants, minerals, even colors and scripts, on the one hand, and celestial/spiritual entities on the other. The magic of this text can be considered astral, natural, and spiritual. The operator in this case needs to have a vast knowledge of planets, signs, and lunar mansions in addition to information on all kinds of animals, plants, and minerals that correspond to the powers of the celestial bodies. The magician also employs symbols and magical scripts including the lunette sigla, a script from late antiquity consisting of combinations of short lines ending in tight curls or loops, thought to originate in Jewish magic, and discussed further below.[9] For example, to attract a lover, the symbols shown in Figure 21.1 are to be inscribed onto a piece of cloth in the day and the hour of Venus with the ascendant being the second decan (a 10° division of a zodiacal sign) of Taurus and occupied by Venus. Then the edge of the cloth is to be burnt as the name of the lover is spoken aloud (pseudo-Majriti 1933: 104–105).

The author created a list of materials and their occult properties, claiming he had received this knowledge from a ledger excavated from a temple constructed in the time of Cleopatra. For example, pure emerald causes the eyes of a snake to fall out instantaneously. The skin of large cats such as lions alleviates recurrent fever if sat on. The excrement of elephants, if hanged on a tree or a woman, causes infertility (pseudo-Majriti 1933: 396–397, 400). Moreover, some magical operations require addressing *ruhaniyyat* (spiritual forces) with rituals and invocations. Specific names are given to these spiritual beings taken from the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica. For example, the principal *ruhaniyya* of Saturn is called Brimas, who in turn has constituent parts: the upper part is a *ruhaniyyat* called Tus, the lower part is called Khrus, dextral Qayus, and sinistral Daryus, the front part is Tamis and the back part is Drus.[10] The *ruhaniyyat* are not the only spiritual beings related to the planets, for elsewhere angels are listed with their own appropriate invocations, rituals, and symbols. For example, if the powers of the sun are sought then the operator must fast seven days, beginning and ending on moon days, slaughter a small calf, eat the liver, and then recite, "Oh Bayel, angel assigned to the shining Sun, the benefactor of the world, of perfect light and luminosity, bringer of happiness and bad fortune, beneficial and harmful, by the name of the Master of the higher firmament, may you do so and so for me." The operator then must create a talisman that contains the symbols, mainly lunette sigla as shown in Figure 21.2 (pseudo-Majriti 1933: 233, 308).

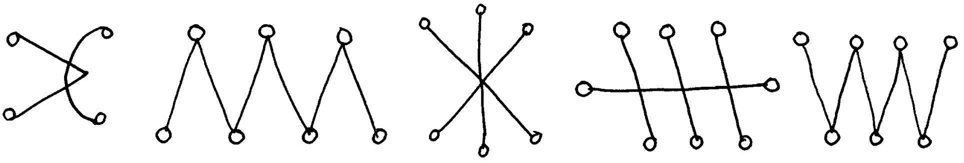

FIGURE 21.1 Authors' reproduction of symbols from *The Goal of the Sage* to be inscribed on a cloth in order to attract a lover. Source: pseudo-Majriti 1933: 104–105.

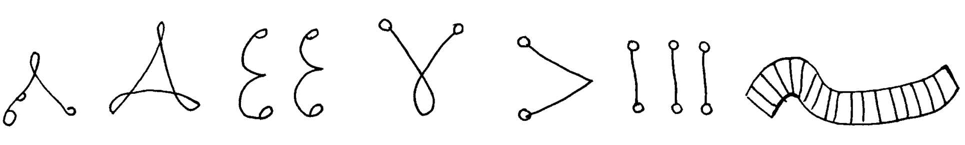

FIGURE 21.2 Authors' reproduction of symbols from *The Goal of the Sage* associated with the angel Bayel assigned to the sun. Source: pseudo-Majriti 1933: 233, 308.

Nabatean Agriculture *of Ibn Wahshiyya*

One of the rituals in the *The Goal of the Sage* containing a planetary prayer, namely for Saturn, is taken from the *Nabatean Agriculture (al-Filaha al-nabatiyya)* of Ibn Wahshiyya (fl. tenth century) (pseudo-Majriti 1933: 230–232; Ibn Wahshiyya 1993–1998: I, 9–12; Pingree 1980: 2). The author of *The Goal of the Sage* confirms that *Nabatean Agriculture* is one of the works in which one finds instructions for creating "wondrous compounds that diffuse the effects of the planets," and indeed the entire seventh chapter of Book Four of the *The Goal of the Sage* is based on the descriptions of the occult properties of plants found in *Nabatean Agriculture* (Majriti 1933: 179, 359–396).

Nabatean Agriculture claims to be a translation from ancient Syriac into Arabic by Ibn Wahshiyya, in the year 291 (903–904). It is described as containing the knowledge of the Chaldean Nabateans *(al-nabat al-kisdaniyyin)*, that is Babylonians, as well as material on various aspects of agriculture, planets/plants correspondences, and speculations on astrology. It is a composite work, based on the efforts of Mesopotamian authors: a work by a certain Saghrith, expanded by Yanbushad, and given final shape by Quthama. The large number of manuscripts dating up to the nineteenth century attests to its huge influence (Hämeen-Anttila 2006: 10, 189; Ibn Wahshiyya 1993–1998: I:1, 3).

Considerable space in *Nabatean Agriculture* is dedicated to making magical objects and talismans. Some magical operations must be done under specific astrological conditions such as the creation of talismans for the fast growth and flourishing of trees. Talismans are also made from plants. For instance, to cause illness and insanity, create an image of the victim on a branch of Myrtus and inscribe his or her name. Also draw the image of a lion, a great serpent, a scorpion, or any venomous animal surrounding the image of the victim. This is to be done under specific astrological conditions. However, not all the magic in *Nabatean Agriculture* is astrological, for, as in *The Goal of the Sage*, some is based on the occult properties of natural things. For example, to remove weeds and other harmful plants that grow around a grapevine, a farmer can mix graveyard dirt with the blood of a man or a bird and create a shape representing a person onto which his name is inscribed. After it dries, the shape is to be fixed on top of a cane with a sharp bottom. The shape is then wrapped with black wool and staked in the affected area. The harmful plants will dry up and wither (Ibn Wahshiyya 1993–1998: 50–51, 108, 147, 381; II, 1308–1309).

A number of additional texts on the occult are attributed to Ibn Wahshiyya including *On Talismans (Kitab al-tillismat)*, *On Poisons (Kitab al-sumum)*, and *Shawq al-mustaham fi maʿrifat rumuz al-aqlam*, known as *Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters* (discussed further below). *On Poisons* contains many recipes that can be considered magical, a great part of which are aggressive, such as the instructions found in the chapters on the preparation of things that kill people by sight and sound. Some of these require astrological knowledge and also include planetary invocations (Hämeen-Anttila 2006: 361; Ibn Wahshiyya 1966: 10–11, 32–38).

Though it cannot be attributed to Ibn Wahshiyya with certainty, *Ancient Alphabets* circulated under his name. It describes and claims to decode ancient alphabets many of which are magical scripts used in talismans and useful for attracting *ruhaniyyat*. An example is the script of the wise man Qalfatrius (Ibn Wahshiyya 1806: 33, 35) (Figure 21.3), reminiscent of the lunette sigla found on some surviving talismans (Porter 2011: 173) and the design in Figure 21.1 and Figure 21.2.

Ikhwan al-Safaʾ (The Brethren of Purity)

A source used by al-Qurtubi, author of *The Goal of the Sage*, was an encyclopedia of philosophical, scientific, mystical, and occult ideas composed by the Ikhwan al-Safaʾ (The Brethren of Purity) and known as *The Epistles (Rasaʾil)* (Pingree 1980: 2). The Brethren of Purity were an anonymous coterie active in tenth-century Iraq. Occult thought permeates the entire work, although they dedicated the fifty-second epistle to the subject of magic and talismans. In this epistle's manuscript tradition there appears to be two versions: a shorter version (52a) and a longer one (52b).[11] The shorter one contains a discourse on the legitimacy of magic according to the Qurʾan and other sources, in addition to an account of the doctrines, practices, and rituals of the Sabeans of Harran. Practical instructions are lacking in this version. In the longer version large parts are also dedicated to the legitimacy of magic, but unlike the shorter version, it actually contains practical elements. For example, we find a description of the lunar mansions and the kinds of operations to be performed under each of them; this is a list taken from the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica, specifically the text entitled the *Ustutas*.[12] In some manuscripts of the longer version we also find instructions for making concoctions or *nairanj*s that attract all kinds of animals to the operator. These too are taken from the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica.[13] Both versions, however, present magic as a part of wisdom, even its culmination. The Brethren describe a type of magic which relies on the agency of *ruhaniyyat*, whose actions are apparent but whose essences are hidden (Ikhwan al-Safaʾ 2011: 91–92). Like the *ruhaniyyat* in the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica and *The Goal of the Sage*, they are ontologically connected to the celestial bodies; moreover, they correspond with angels. In the tenth chapter of Epistle 20, the Brethren mention the *ruhaniyyat* of the planets, their counterparts in the human body and corresponding angels. For example, the *ruhaniyyat* of the sun control the wholeness and completeness of the universe and they correspond with the innate heat in the body; the corresponding angel is Israfʾil (Ikhwan al-Safaʾ 2013: 49–50, 307–312). Elsewhere in the *Epistles*, not in the fifty-second chapter, the Brethren describe magical squares; for example, they recommend the 3 × 3 magic square as an aid to women in childbirth when it is written on two ceramic pieces that were never touched by water and then hung on a woman in labour.[14]

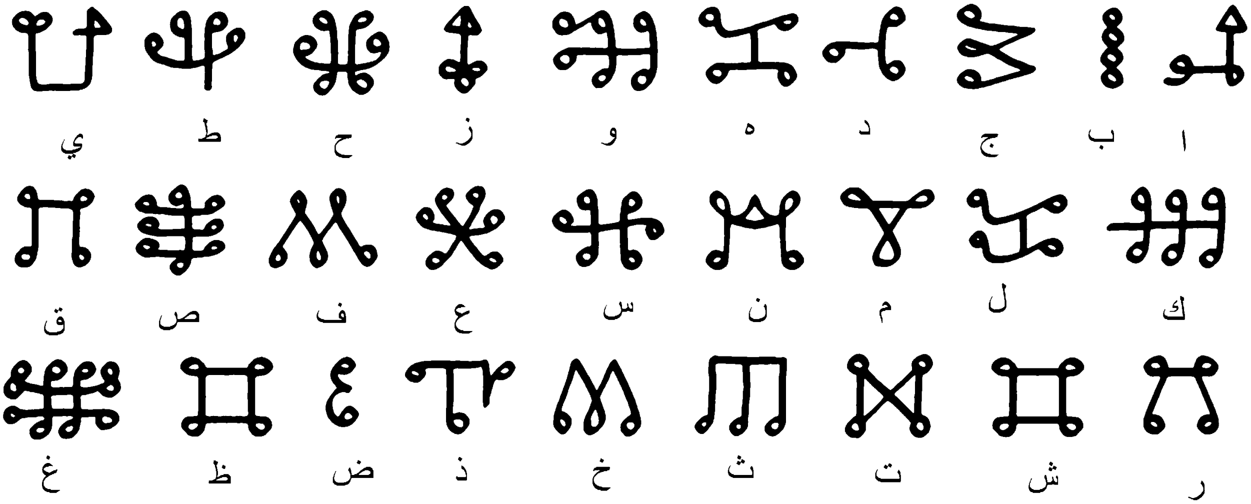
ا ب ج د ه و ز ح ط ي
ك ل م ن س ع ف ص ق
ر ش ت ث خ ذ ض ظ غ

Figure 21.3 Authors' reproduction of magical alphabet of Qalfatrios from *Ancient Alphabets* and hieroglyphic characters attributed to Ibn Wahshiyya. Source: Ibn Wahshiyya 1806: 33, 35.

The Secret of Secrets

The pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets* (*Sirr al-asrār*) forms the final part of a longer epistle said to be from Aristotle to Alexander the Great offering political, moral, and dietary advice. The work itself claims in the proem to be a translation from Greek into Syriac then into Arabic by the ninth-century Baghdadi translator Yaha ibn al Bitriq, although there is insufficient evidence to support the existence of a Greek original (Badawi 1954: 69). Moreover, many passages in the *Secret of Secrets* are taken from the *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity (Ebstein 2013: 210–212). One of the most interesting sections in this work is concerned with the wondrous "King's talisman," which supposedly brings power to the operator and inspires fear and awe in the people who encounter it; moreover, it repels harm. Under very strict and complicated astrological conditions, a ring is to be made on a Thursday morning from a piece of red ruby on which is inscribed an image of a crowned yet hairless winged man, riding a lion and holding a flag, in addition to six hairless men prostrating between the man's hands. Other materials are inscribed with names of planetary intelligences or spirits and inserted in the ring. It should be suffumigated in a very elaborate ritual which includes an invocation of the sun. As a result a *ruhaniyya* will visit the operator in a dream confirming the success of the ritual. Other talismans are described for repelling snakes and scorpions and for pacifying a storm (Badawi 1954: 156, 159–164).

Al-Sirr al-Maktum (The Concealed Secret), and Kitab al-Shamil wa al-bahr al-kamil (The Comprehensive Book and the Complete Sea).

Al-Sirr al-Maktam is attributed to the theologian and philosopher Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149–1209). It is concerned with astrology and magic, which is largely planetary drawing from the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica and other sources of astral magic.[15] Many sections are dedicated to the construction of talismans and magical concoctions for love, harmony, sexual excitement, and other purposes.[16]

Kitab al-shamil wa al-bahr al-kamil (The Comprehensive Book and the Complete Sea) is similar in content and scope to The Concealed Secret. It is attributed to the Hanafi grammarian and rhetorician Abu Yaʿqub al Sakkaki (d. 1229). This text is made up of five books concerned with various magical practices: talismans according to the pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica, rings, lamps, planetary magic and invocations, magic squares and others. The practices therein are made effective by planetary forces, here also referred to as *ruhaniyyat*, angels, occult properties of natural materials, and also the power of words, divine names of God, and mysterious scripts. An example of the practices therein: an antidote can be created by engraving on Bezoar stone, long considered to have properties that counteract poisons, the forms of a snake and a scorpion under the sign of Scorpio.[17]

It is worth noting that in The Concealed Secret and The Comprehensive Book, the *ruhaniyyat*, which are planetary spiritual forces in the pseudo-Aristotelian

Hermetica and *Ghayat al-hakim* become explicitly associated with angels. Unlike the texts mentioned so far, here we have *jinn* and angel magic, which requires invocations, divine names, sigils, magical scripts, and complex diagrams.[18]

Hajji Khalifa attributes one *al-Shamil min al-bahr al-kamil* to Abi al-Fadl Muhmmad b. Ahmad al-Tabsi who died in 1089. This book, he tells us, is concerned with "the foundations of magic and the rules of astrology" (*usul al-taʿzim wa qawa id al-tanjim*). Al-Sakkaki's work fits the description though the incipit included in the entry is different. In another entry, a work called simply al-Shamil is attributed to al-Sakkaki but described as being concerned with "the science of the letter" (*ʿilm al-harf*), which is described below. The Comprehensive Book does include sections that correspond with this description.[19] Al-Sakkaki seems to have been known as an occultist. We learn from Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir (d. 1535) in his *Habib al-siyar* (The Lover of Histories) that it was by means of occult forces that al-Sakkaki came into the service of the Mongol emperor Chagatai Khan (r. 1227–1242) (Zadeh 2014: 133–134). As for The Concealed Secret, Hajji Khalifa casts doubt over its attribution to al-Razi, though Ibn Khaldun considers him to be the author.[20]

The works attributed to Ahmad al-Buni

In the thirteenth century, the efflorescence of Sufism that took place led to the intermingling of magic with Islamic devotional elements. This is evident in the works of al- Sakkaki and al-Razi mentioned above but it is most clear in the works attributed to Abu al-ʿAbbas Ahmad al-Buni, who flourished in Cairo about 1225 (Francis IV 2005: 97–99; Gardiner 2012: 89). Ibn Khaldun mentions him in his *Muqaddima* as a master of letter magic (Asatrian 2003: 102; Ibn Khaldun 2000: 488–489). The occult science of letters correlates letters with the Sufi–Neoplatonic idea of an emanative hierarchy governing the universe (Francis IV 2005: 120–121; Gardiner 2012: 88) and the mastery of these letters is believed to benefit the operator spiritually and also magically (Hamadan 1985). When used magically this practice is also called *simiyaʿ*.

Unfortunately not a lot is known about al-Buni's life, but evidence suggests that he was North African and had taken instructions by Sufi masters.[21] He was considered by some as a saint.[22] He has written several treatises on the occult science of lettrism, which correlates Arabic *abjad* letters with the emanative hierarchy of the universe.[23] The mastery of which, as noted, provides spiritual and magical reward to the adept.[24] The circulation and influence of his works were first restricted to Sufi disciples and closed auditions. By the fourteenth century they became better known outside these circles and from there grew in popularity.[25] However, the fame of al-Buni today rests on the popular printed editions of a work known as *Shams al-maʿarif al-khubra (The Sun of Knowledge, the Larger Version)*, which is actually a compilation of al-Bunian occult practices produced in the seventeenth century.[26] Nevertheless, it made him one of the most recognized authors on magic and lettrism in the Islamic world to this day.

There are many other titles questionably attributed to al-Buni but a widely copied and consistent text known as *Shams al-maʿarif wa lataʾif al-ʿawarif* (The Sun of Knowledge and the Secrets of Gnosis) formed the basis of the *Larger Version*. This text contains anachronisms which could possibly be interpolations by students.[27] This work represents a comprehensive attempt to systematize and formalize Islamic magic in the medieval period.[28] The reformulations of *The Sun of Knowledge and the Secrets of Gnosis*, such as the *Larger Version* and others that appear in compilations and single texts across the Islamic world, can be considered the reason why a larger number of more recent talismans and amulets can be identified as "al-Bunian" due to the elements, symbols, and inscriptions elaborated in his aforementioned works (Hamès 2007).

This text elaborates the correspondences between things that will enable the operator to organize the elements of his practice towards a specific purpose. For example, each level in the cosmological hierarchy corresponds to a letter (see Table 21.1).[29]

The Throne (*al-ʿArsh*) and Pedestal (*al-Kursi*) are mentioned in the Qurʾan. God's Throne is carried by angels (Q20: 5, Q69: 17) and His Chair extends over the heavens and earth (Q2: 255). According to al-Buni, the Throne corresponds with the Intellect, the first Neoplatonic emanation, and the Chair corresponds with the Soul of the World, the second emanation. Including the celestial spheres, these constitute the higher world (*ʿalam ʿulwi*) in the cosmology of al-Buni. The author also gives correspondences pertaining to the 28 mansions of the moon, including the associated *ruhaniyyat*, psychological states, and purposes.[30]

Table 21.1 Correspondence between letters and cosmological levels according to *The Sun of Knowledge and the Secrets of Gnosis.*

Level	*Letter*	
Throne	ا	a
Chair	ب	b
Saturn	ج	j
Jupiter	د	d
Mars	ه	h
Sun	و	o
Venus	ز	z
Mercury	ح	ḥ
Moon	ط	ṭ

Moreover, al-Buni establishes theurgic and magical uses of Islamic elements such as “the beautiful names of God” (*al-asma al-husna*) and verses of the Qurʾan. For instance, a table can be constructed based on the letters in the name “Allah” (see Table 21.2).[31]

Another example is that of correspondences given for the verses of *Sura al-fatiha*, the opening chapter of the Qur’an (see Table 21.3).[32]

Table 21.2 Correspondence of letters, cardinal points, angels, day, and qualities according to *The Sun of Knowledge and the Secrets of Gnosis.*

Letter	ه *H*	ل *L*	ل *L*	ا *A*
Cardinal Points	South	North	West	East
Angel	Mika’il (Bounty)	Uzra’il (Death)	Israfil (Apocalypse)	Gibra’il (Revelation)
Day	Wednesday	Saturday	Thursday	Monday
Quality	Mixture	Cold Dry	Hot Wet	Cold Wet

Table 21.3 Verses of *Sura al-fatiha* and their corresponding days, divine names, planets, and angels according to *The Sun of Knowledge and the Secrets of Gnosis.*

Day	*Verse*	*Divine Name*	*Planet*	*Angel*
Sunday	1: In the name of the Merciful and Compassionate God.	الحي القيوم The Living The Guardian	Sun	Ruqia’il
Monday	2: Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all beings.	السريع القريب The Fast The Near	Moon	Mansa‘
Tuesday	3: The Merciful, the Compassionate.	القاضي العزيز The Judge The Honourable	Mars	Thatghas
Wednesday	4: Master of the Day of Reckoning.	مقلب القلوب Turner of Hearts	Mercury	Mika’il
Thursday	5: You we serve, to You we turn for help.	الحكيم العليم The All-Wise The All-Knowing	Jupiter	Surfa’il
Friday	6: Guide us on the straight path	الرحمن الرحيم The Compassionate And Merciful	Venus	‘Inya’il
Saturday	7: The path of those You have blessed, not of those against whom there is anger, nor those who go astray.[1]	القادر المقتدر The All-Powerful The Determiner	Saturn	‘Azra’il

[1] *The Qur’an*, trans. Alan Jones (Exeter: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007), Sura 1 (Al-Fatiha): 1-7 (p. 23).

Table 21.4 The 4 × 4 magic square.

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

We also find in *The Sun of Knowledge and the Secrets of Gnosis* explanations and instructions for magical diagrams and magic squares, both numerical and letter-based.[33] A magic square is a square grid in which specific numbers are arranged so that each column, row, and diagonal adds up to the same number. One example is the 4 × 4 magic square shown in Table 21.4.

This square particularly was ascribed (falsely) to Plato and is one of the most popular and well known in the Islamic world (Cammann 1969: 202). It can be incorporated in rings, or soaked in rain water and honey and then consumed; it is used for chest pains, an antidote for the venom of scorpions and snakes, and for gaining bounty.[34]

Often a ritual or a "spell" is charged with a prayer. This can be an orthodox formula from the tradition of "Answered Prayers" derived from the hadith, although al-Buni also recommends invocations of *ruhaniyyat*, angels, *jinn*, and "servants," but always as entities subservient to God and actualizing the magical work by His permission, working through the cosmic letter scheme and its Qurʾanic and devotional associations.

It is notable that the earlier magical texts remain largely faithful to the Neoplatonic ontology of these *ruhaniyyat*, maintaining that they are astral volitional forces that work by means of astral emanations (Boudet, Caiozzo, and Weill-Parot 2011: 19). However, with the rise of Sufism towards the thirteenth century the nature of these *ruhaniyyat* underwent a fundamental transformation from powers of a single ontological origin, that is, the celestial world manifest in the stars and planets that are studied by astrologers and magicians, to intelligent entities or spirits emerging from inaccessible mysterious dimensions known in Arabic as *ghayb* (hidden), the true knowledge known only to God. The earlier texts also emphasize that magic is an extension of the operations of nature manipulated by the magician (Weill-Parot 2011: 130–131), while the magic of al-Buni and those influenced by him implies that magic is a disruption reliant on the power of the operator. In the early medieval period this is reflected in the intermingling of magic with astrology and natural philosophy, whereas later magic was founded upon Sufi ideas, with the vocabulary of magic intermixed with religious elements (Asatrian 2003: 87–89).

The Nature and Survival of Magical Objects and the Magical Vocabulary

The texts that have been highlighted above help us to gain an idea of the wider context for the types of inscriptions and symbols that appear on amulets and other artifacts. Amulets and talismanic objects used by Muslims appeal to God in the first instance. In this respect they differ substantially from Byzantine, Roman, early Iranian, and other pre-Islamic magic which addressed demonic forces or spirits of the dead. In other words, these objects encompass not only magical symbols but also evocations, prayers, and verses from the Qurʾan, and are generally addressed to God or one of His intercessors. Their main functions are to ward off misfortune and the "evil eye," to gain good fortune, to promote healing, or to increase fertility, potency or attractiveness. Despite regional variations, what unites these objects is that they are characterized by the use of a particular and distinctive vocabulary of writings and symbols, which can appear in a variety of combinations, a vocabulary which can be said to have been formalized by the thirteenth century. This was aided by the spread of the printing press, which made this material generally more accessible to a wide range of practitioners.

In terms of the survival of such objects, there are few that can be attributed with certainty to before the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. More magical artifacts have survived from later periods and we can only speculate about the reasons for the apparent lack of material evidence of the theories and practices discussed in the early medieval literature. It could be due to the perishable nature of earlier objects such as *niranjiyat* or perhaps they were subject to corrosion, since many were made of metals. Also, many of the objects that have survived in museums and other public resources originally belonged to personal collections gathered by travelers and researchers, from as early as the fifteenth century, as curios of the cultures they visited and thus it is more likely that these objects were created nearer the time of the collectors' sojourns in these regions (Porter 2011: 19–21).

The magical vocabulary found on extant amulets and talismans can be broken down into a number of elements, the earliest surviving examples of which reflect pre-Islamic magical symbolism: a long-horned stag[35] or a remarkably stable but complex design composed of a scorpion, rampant lion or dog, a canopy of stars, and a frame of pseudo-Kufic writing which occurs on Iranian amuletic objects of the ninth or early tenth century (Figure 21.4) (Savage-Smith 1997: 138–139). The prevalence of the scorpion in the arid areas of the Islamic lands has meant that it has long been associated with danger and evil. According to the hadith, charms could lawfully be employed against them (Flood 2014: 467). At the same time, however, as a symbol the scorpion has an apotropaic function as protector "to counter the power of evil" as seen, for example, on the columns of the

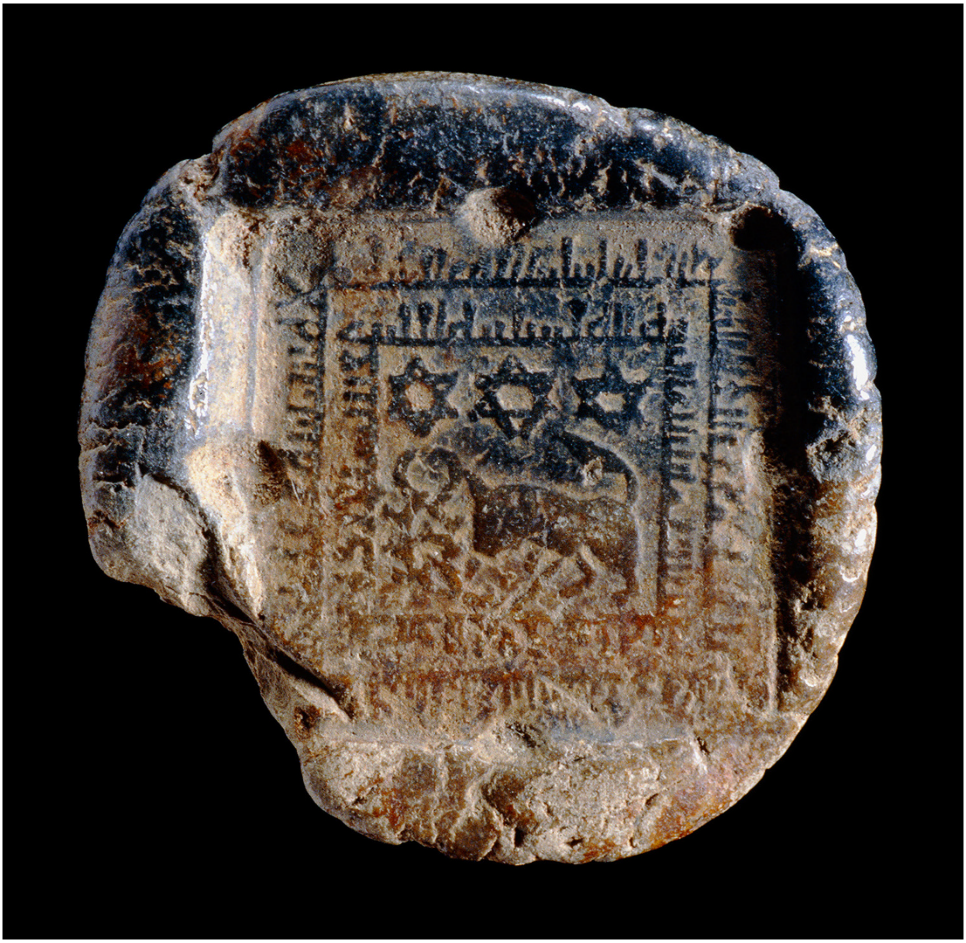

FIGURE 21.4 Clay bulla, lion facing a scorpion under star canopy, *c.* ninth–tenth century. Diameter: 2.9 cm. Source: Courtesy, Trustees of The British Museum, 1991, 0727.4.

twelfth-century Friday mosque at Ajmir or the "scorpion-man" at the entrance to the Friday mosque in Hims going back to at least the tenth century (Flood 2006: 150, 2009: 169). In Islamic literature scorpions appear as embodiments of evil (Frembgen 2004: 102). And although the motif described and illustrated in Figure 21.4 fell out of the talismanic repertoire, practices and legends surrounding the scorpion continued. There are inscriptions relating to scorpions and designs of them on magical healing bowls (Savage-Smith 1997: 74, 82–83); there is the additional association with Scorpio, the sign of the zodiac (Caiozzo 2003: 213–230, 299–300; Carboni 1997: 39ff).

From the mid-twelfth century, these early elements were joined by others, some of which are discussed in detail below. At one end of the spectrum are particular verses from the Qur'an and invocations to God or revered figures in Islam, such as the prophets or the Shiʿi imams. At the other end, a range of mysterious signs such as the lunette script referred to above, writings and symbols, magic squares, and astrological symbols, many of which were derivatives from the Greco-Roman world. The first datable use of this vocabulary is found on magic medicinal bowls from the reign of Nur al-Din Zangi (r. in Damascus 1146–1174) where we find indecipherable magical scripts juxtaposed with other texts in *naskh* script. Other objects from about the same period, such as mirrors (see below), contain the "Seven Signs" and the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (*ahl al-kahf*) – the legendary youths who slept for centuries to avoid Roman persecution and, in a further example of everyday use in the medieval period, the names of the Sleepers are invoked on a paper amulet from the thirteenth-century site of Quseir (Guo 2004: 312; Porter 2007: 127; Savage-Smith 1997: 82).

From the early medieval period on, therefore, these texts, signs, and symbols can be found not only on groups of objects such as amulets, magic medicinal bowls, or talismanic shirts but also in other contexts, placed as protective elements: an interesting resurgence of the use of the Seven Sleepers occurred under the Ottomans where they appear in contexts from architecture to calligraphy, the names sometimes turned into the form of a ship (Porter 2007). We find the engraving of the "Seven Signs" – seven magical symbols which include a hexagram – on a cistern in Yemen (Heymeyer 2008), a six-pointed star (one of the Seven Signs) placed on an Ottoman fortress for extra protection (Gruber 2013: 5), the invocation *ya kabikaj* (O Buttercup) on a manuscript as a guard against vermin, or in an Indian context as a protective invocation to the lord of cockroaches (Savage-Smith 2005; Titley 2005: xii). Locks often had amuletic designs placed upon them, many of which were connected to the tradition of placing padlocks on sacred places or tombs of saints to mark a vow taken (Stanley 1997; Torre 1989). In a particular Southeast Asian practice, magical elements were often included in the personal seals of known individuals or rulers, as though adding a layer of protection to that person and the document being stamped (Gallop and Porter 2012: 98).

Elements of the Magical Vocabulary

Qurʾanic vocabulary

The most important component of the vocabulary is the Qurʾan itself. Two chapters (*sura*s) are regarded as particularly talismanic: al-Falaq (Q113) and al-Nas (Q114), in addition to al-Ikhlas (Q112). Al-Bukhari (d. 870), the authoritative compiler of the hadith, noted that according to ʿA'isha, the Prophet's wife, when the Prophet fell ill he would recite these three *sura*s and when he could not, ʿA'isha recited them for him (Epelboin *et al.* 2013:155 ff.; Hamès 2001). The most popular individual passages of the Qurʾan are the "Fatiha," the opening verses, and the "Throne Verse" *(ayat al-kursi*) (Q2: 255), which is also known as the "verse of seeking refuge" or the "verse for driving out Satan" (Canaan 1937–1938: 75; O'Connor 2004; Savage-Smith 1997: 61–62). There are, in addition, verses that were used particularly for healing: an amulet in the British Museum is inscribed with each occurrence of the word to heal in the Qurʾan. To strengthen its healing potential further it includes the 3 × 3 *buduh* square (see below), which has strong associations with healing (Porter 2011: 171 no. A127). There is also a body of literature known as the *Fadaʾil al-Qurʾan* (Merits of the Qurʾan) which emerges in the medieval era and talks about the benefits of reciting certain *sura*s in particular circumstances. For example, as regards Al ʿImran (Q3), "If you write it with saffron and you have it worn as an amulet by a woman who wishes to become pregnant, she will by the grace of God" (Hamès 2001: 87). On the basis of a corpus of paper amulets from Senegal, Hamès discusses the deployment of certain passages from the Qurʾan for particular circumstances, ranging from stopping hemorrhages to making a person attractive to another (Hamès 2001: 90ff).

Also strongly associated with the Qurʾan are invocations to particular revered figures: the Prophet Muhammad of course, and the Hebrew Prophets mentioned in the Qurʾan, who are believed by Ibn Khaldun to be able to perform miracles (Asatrian 2003: 83ff), including Moses (Musa), Abraham (Ibrahim), Ishmael (Ismaʿil), and Solomon (Sulayman). In addition to this there are the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, mentioned above, whose story is told in the Qurʾan (Q18: 9–26), although their names are not mentioned there. The names of the Archangels are frequently inscribed around the sides of the magic squares. Derived from Hebrew angelology, they are known as "the sultans of the angels" (*al-salatin al-malaʾika*) and are each believed to be endowed with special gifts and functions: Jibraʾil (Gabriel), the messenger to the Prophets through whom the Qurʾan was transmitted; Mikaʾil, who presides over rain and plants; Israfil, who stands beside the throne guarding the heavenly trumpet; and Azraʾil, the angel of death. Names of other angels, playing different roles such as guarding particular days of the week, also appear on amulets, as do strange words, whose ending *il* indicates that these are also the names of angels (Canaan 1937–1938: 81–83; Porter 2011: 166 ff).

Another important element of the magical vocabulary are "the beautiful names of God," or the "ninety-nine names of God" as they are often referred to, and the subject of an entire treatise by al-Buni. The appellation "the beautiful names" comes from the Qurʾan (*Ta-Haʾ*, Q20: 18): "There is no God but He to Him belong the beautiful names." Although traditionally believed to comprise 99 names, after the hadith attributed to Abu Hurayra, "God has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one, and whoever enumerates them will enter Paradise" (Gardet *EI*^{2})[36] there are in fact closer to 400 names in all and the list has never remained completely fixed. Also popular and listed on amulets were the names of the Prophet Muhammad (Blair 2001: 87–88; Redhouse 1880).

Letter Magic and Magical Alphabets

By employing the magical properties of the letters themselves, it was said that one could sometimes control angels, celestial spirits, and the *jinn*. Letter magic, known as *ʿilm al-huruf* (the science of the letters), can be considered the second main major element of the magical vocabulary.

ʿIlm al-huruf may have initially developed in a Shiʿi milieu, with the Shiʿi imam Jaʿfar al-Sadiq (d. 765) said to have played a major role (Macdonald *EI*^{2}). It spread into Sunni and Sufi contexts in the ninth century and developed into a Sufi science by the thirteenth century. It then went in two different directions: the first being the subject of mystical speculations found in works of mystics, such as Ibn ʿArabi (d. 1240); and the second developed in books about magic like the much-cited works of the latter's contemporary, al-Buni (Lory 1989).

Therefore, letters appear extensively on amulets and other talismanic objects. There are particular groups of letters that have significance, notably, the "mysterious letters of the Qurʾan." These are the 14 letters that appear singly or in groups at the beginning of 29 of the *sura*s of the Qurʾan and referred to as *al-huruf al-muqattaʿa* or *al-huruf al-fawatih*,[37] the meaning of which has been a subject of debate since early Islam (Massey 2001; Seale 1978).

Letters of the alphabet were also grouped according to the four elements (fire, air, earth, and water) and were frequently represented by numerals using the alphanumeric system known as *abjad*, mentioned above, the old Semitic order of the alphabet which begins *alif*, *ba*, *jim*, *dal*, and hence its name. On some amulets letters are combined with numerals. In a further appearance of the Arabic letter, rows of individual letters are often repeated, while short texts, such as the *basmala* or some of the names of God, are written in isolated form (with unconnected letters) which is believed to enhance the power of the amulet. It is particularly common to find the use of simple unembellished Kufic script on talismanic objects harking back to an early use of Kufic in magic (Porter 2010). On magic medicinal bowls for example, they appear in cartouches juxtaposed with legible inscriptions in *naskh* script. There are also groups of amulets with letter strings in a style, which Rehatsek described as "Linear Kufic" (*kufique linéaire*), and which are sometimes inscribed on amulets in reverse. Rehatsek also identified such letters as associated with angels and their perfumes (Porter 2011: 175ff.; Rehatsek 1880; Savage-Smith 1997: 86).

Moreover, inscriptions bearing ancient languages and scripts were sometimes reused for talismanic purposes, or such scripts were employed on talismanic objects, possibly due to the belief that using words of foreign origin – Hebrew, Syriac, or Greek, for example – were more efficacious than Arabic (Gonella 2010). Some amulet makers employed texts such as that of Ibn Wahshiyya's *Ancient Alphabets*, especially the so-called lunette script (Figure 21.1, Figure 21.2, Figure 21.3). The sigla illustrated in the texts of Ibn Wahshiyya and the The Goal of the Sage frequently appear on talismanic discs, where they are combined with other elements of the vocabulary (the *basmala* in individual letters, for example); they also occur in manuscripts of the Ottoman period and on talismanic shirts (Gruber 2013: 3; Savage-Smith 1997: 110). An example of these "scripts" on a talismanic plaque placed around the figure of Solomon is illustrated in Figure 21.5.

Magic Squares

Magic squares also became an important part of the vocabulary of talisman makers and compilers of magical manuals, particularly after the thirteenth century (Savage-Smith 1997: 60). The only magic square employed on amulets prior to the thirteenth century was the simple 3 × 3 design having nine cells in which the letter/numerals from one to nine were arranged so that every row and every column as well as the two diagonals had the same sum: 15. This ancient magic square (possibly of Chinese origin) was given its own special name of *buduh*, derived from the four letter/numerals that are placed in the corner squares (the letters b = 2, d = 4, w/u = 6, and h = 8). So potent were the magical properties of this square that the name itself, *buduh*, acquired its own occult potency. Thus, when one did not wish or know how to write the magic square, one could invoke it against stomach pains, temporary impotency, or even to become invisible, by writing or saying *ya buduh* (O buduh). That it was known and invoked from at least the tenth century is clear from a reference in the tenth-century *Epistles* by the Ikhwan al Safaʾ, which advocates it as an aid to women in childbirth if it is written on two ceramic pieces that were never touched by water and then hung on a woman in labor (Ikhwan al-Safaʾ 2008: I, 112). It featured extensively in the writings of al-Buni, and the 3 × 3 design continued to be used for centuries, often associated with the names of the four Archangels and placed within a larger design as in Figure 21.6.

Magic squares as large as 28 × 28 are described in the anonymous twelfth-century *Album of Harmonious Numbers (Diwan al-ʿadad al-wafq)* that also provides a remarkable history of magic squares (British Library, Delhi Arabic MS 110, analyzed in a forthcoming study by Bink Hallum). In recent centuries, magic squares as large as 100 × 100 occur on talismanic charts (Savage-Smith 1997: 110–115). The literature on true magic squares is extensive, for it has attracted the attention of historians of mathematics and puzzles. Yet the focus of virtually all the scholarly literature has been upon the mathematical methods of creating magic squares of higher order, rather than upon their magical significance or their role in popular culture (Cammann 1969; Sesiano 1996, 2003).

In a magical context there were also squares that on first sight appear to be "magic squares" but in fact lack the required mathematical properties. These fall into two categories: the so-called Latin square (in Arabic, *wafq majazi*,

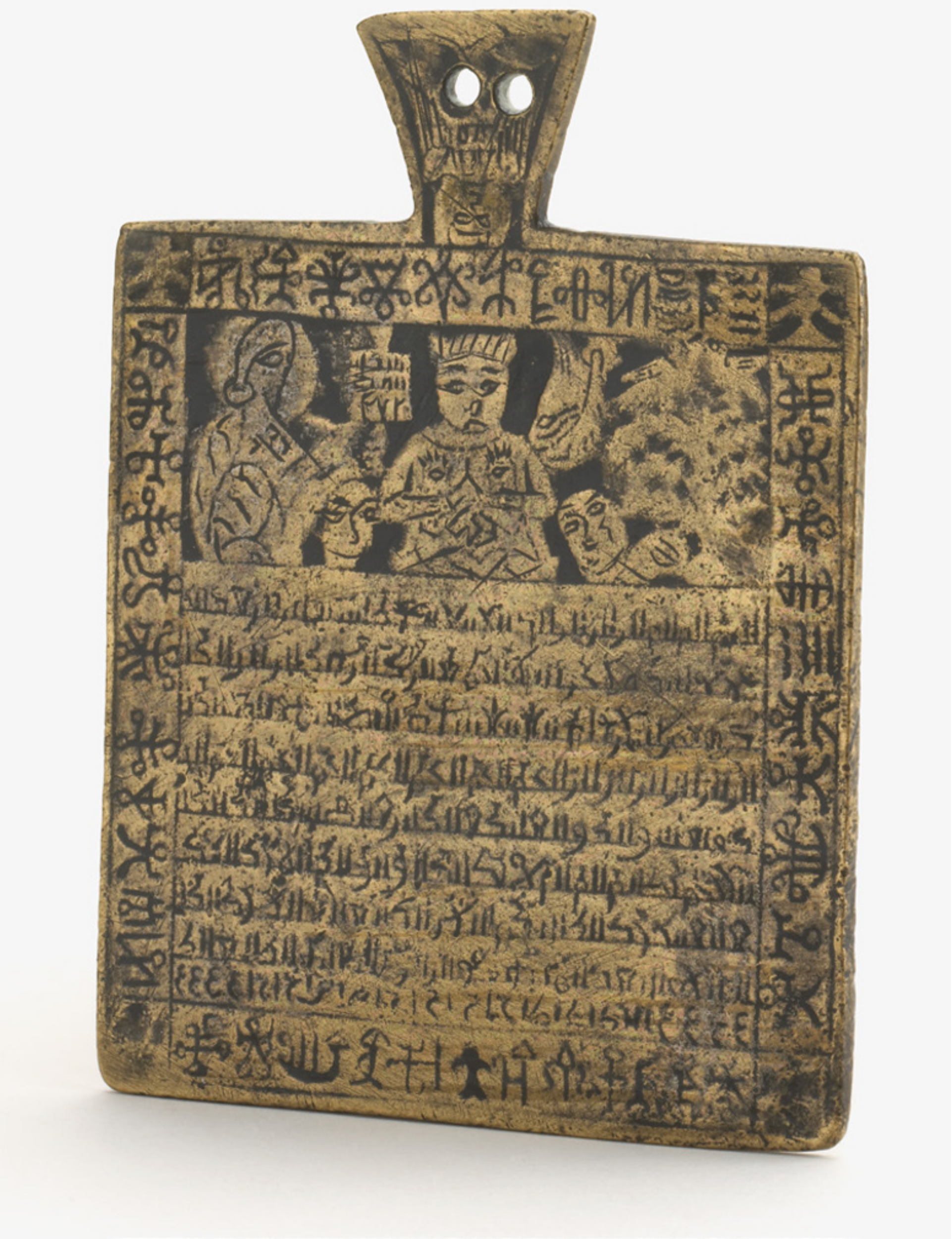

FIGURE 21.5 Brass talismanic plaque with magical scripts and the seated figure of Solomon, *c.* nineteenth century. 11.5 × 9.0 cm. Source: Courtesy, Trustees of The British Museum. OA.+ 2606.

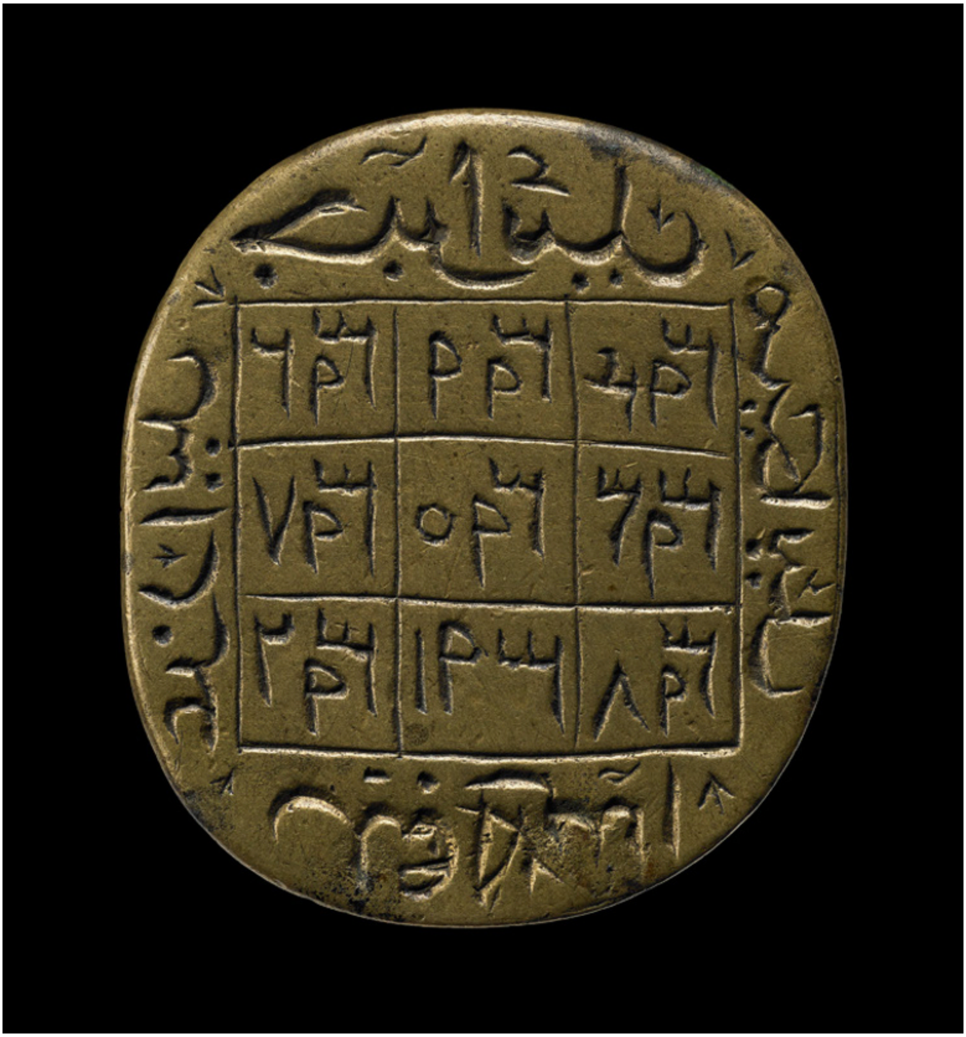

FIGURE 21.6 Brass seal with 3 × 3 magic square, *c*. nineteenth century. 27.0 × 2.5 cm. Each of the numbers has had 39 added to it, totaling 1185. In the *abjad* system this makes up the invocation *ya ism al-Aʿzam* (O greatest name [of God]). Source: Courtesy, Trustees of The British Museum 1893,0215.3.

"false magic square") and the "verse square." In the former, each row and each column contain the same set of symbols (be they numerals, letters, words, or abstract marks), but with the order of the symbols differing in each row or column. In the "verse square" the cells of the square are filled with words or phrases, but not arranged as in a Latin square. Rather, in each consecutive row one word is dropped on the right side and a new one added on the left until the entire selected verse (usually from the Qurʾan) is worked into the square (Savage-Smith 1997: 58–59, 106–107).

Zodiacal Motifs and the "Seven Signs"

From the thirteenth century onward, the repertoire of the amulet maker encompassed a further number of distinctive designs, including some astrological iconography derived from classical antiquity (usually anthropomorphized representations, adapted to Islamic iconographic conventions, of the zodiacal signs and the seven classical planets). These signs with accompanying texts can sometimes be found on magical bowls, for example, where they are combined with the other elements of "the vocabulary" (Spoer 1938). Occasionally, bowls or other objects have inscriptions stating that they were produced under particular zodiacal signs or planetary risings (Flood 2014: 478; Savage-Smith 1997: 82), thus maintaining an earlier textual tradition that emphasizes the need to observe the appropriate astrological conditions in making magical objects, as discussed above in the case of the The Goal of the Sage and the *Secret of Secrets.*

Another common design is a row of seven magical symbols, one of which is a five-pointed star (or pentagram), or sometimes a hexagram, traditionally called the "Seal of Solomon" (Figure 21.7). The seven magical symbols together represented

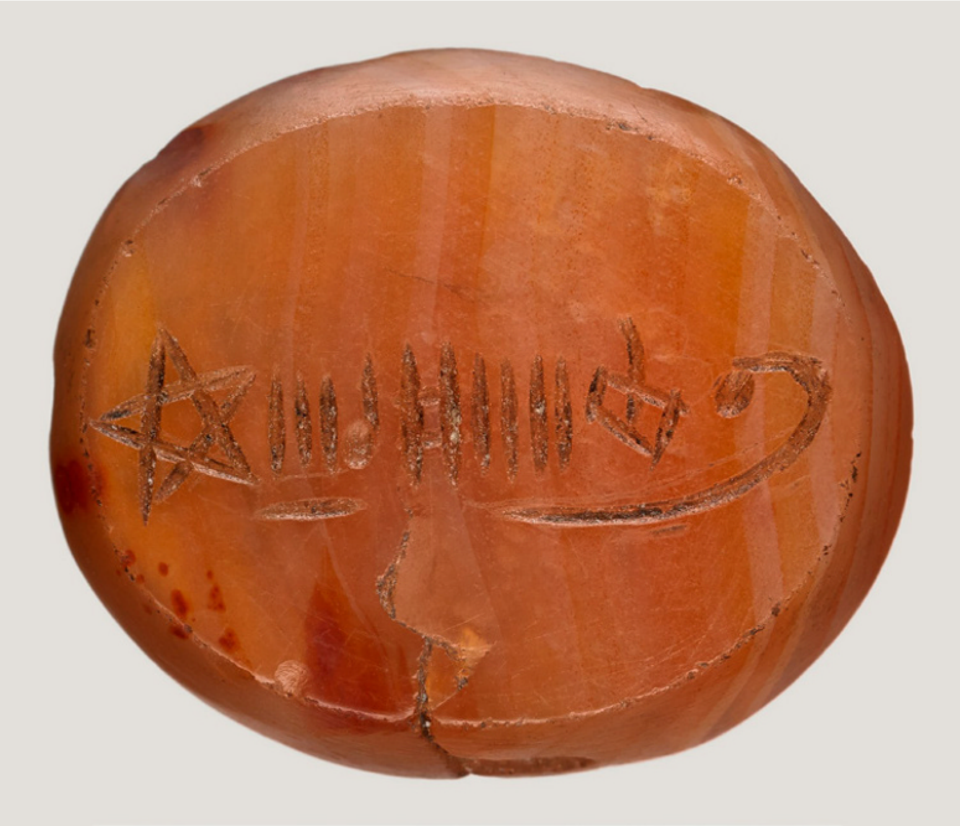

Figure 21.7 Carnelian amulet inscribed with the "Seven Magical Signs." 1.5 × 1.2 cm. Courtesy, Trustees of The British Museum 1878 12–20 68.

the sigla of God's Holy Name, though historians have sometimes confusingly called them the "Seven Seals of Solomon" (Dawkins 1944: 146; Doutté 1909: 156–157). Pseudo-al-Buni described these signs as follows, invoking the letters *mim*, *ha'*, and *waw* of the Arabic alphabet:

> three sticks are lined up after a seal, at their head is a bent head of a lance, a *mīm* squashed and amputated, then a ladder which leads to every hoped-for object but which is nonetheless not a ladder; four objects resembling fingers have been lined up, they point towards good things but (they are) without a fist, a *ḥaʾ* in half then a *wāw* bent over like a tube (*unbūb*) of a cupper (*hijam*) but which is not a cupping glass. (Anawati 1966: 24–27)

The "Seven Signs" are found accompanying other elements of the vocabulary from early medieval times and continue to be used today inscribed on the paper amulets from Senegal where many other of the elements of the vocabulary (magic squares, and so on) also appear (Epelboin *et al.* 2013: 214).

Categories of Objects

Amulets

The term "amulet" is interchangeable with the term "talisman," which derives from the Greek word *telesma*.[38] Other terms include *hirz* used in the Maghrib mostly for a written charm and *hijab* in Egypt. In Iran, India, and the Ottoman Empire, the term *muhr*, which is also used for a coin or for a clay tablet composed of the earth of a sacred place and often invested with curative or amuletic purposes (Venzlaff 1995), is often employed. An amulet can be defined as an object generally worn for protection and most often made from a durable material such as a metal or a hardstone. Amulet can also be applied to paper examples, although "talisman" is often used to describe these less robust and usually individualized forms.

It is on amulets that we find the widest range of elements from the "magical vocabulary." The principal element is the use of the Qurʾan, either complete texts which include the Throne Verse (Q2: 255–256) or entire chapters such as *al-muʿawidhatan* (Q113 and Q114). The "names of God" form the next most prevalent element. Also encountered on amulets are magic squares, sometimes composed of the "mysterious letters of the Qurʾan" or the "names of God" written with letters translated into numerals through the use of the *abjad* alphabet. The fact that so much of the Qurʾan is present on amulets has led Hamès to describe the Qurʾan as "a vast reservoir that can be channeled to satisfy every human need" (Hamès 2001: 95).

In the Islamic lands, the amulet will generally be made from metal or a semi-precious stone (e.g., carnelian, chalcedony), to be worn about the person or placed in the home. The stone itself will often have particular properties, some of them medicinal, or carry other associations. A hadith of the Prophet Muhammad stated, "The one who wears a carnelian ring will always know divine favour and happiness" (Inizan, Jazmin, and Mermier 1992: 157). This then accounts for the pre-eminence of carnelian (*ʿaqiq*) among the stones for both seals and amulets. Some properties attributed to carnelian include its ability to control fear in times of battle, to stop hemorrhage through its red color, and its ability to remove tooth decay if rubbed against the teeth (al-Tifaschi 1998: 222). Al-Biruni (d. 1048) mentions that the Turks believed that jade (*yashm*) – which with its varieties was a particularly popular material for making seals and amulets in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – averted the evil eye, a belief he considered nonsense although he had been persuaded that it could mediate the after-effects of lightning (al-Biruni 2007: 171).

In Iran silver predominated in the eighteenth and nineteen centuries for the use of amulets. When writing on an amulet made of paper or other materials, the medium, such as the type of ink, used to inscribe it could also be important. In the Hadramawt in Yemen, for example, amulets known as *sarf* (made now from paper but originally pebbles) were painted with "dragon's blood" or resin; once the text became worn, the amulets would lose their efficacy (Rodionov 2010: 295). Such amulets were believed to keep their strength as long as the integrity of the inscription and the amulet itself were not compromised.

Paper amulets were either handwritten or block printed, and sometimes stamped with seals. These were often stored within an amulet case that could be made of silver (in Yemen, Oman, Iran, for example) or lead (associated with medieval Spain), or, as in West Africa and elsewhere, they were sewn into clothes and the recipient of the amulet forbidden from opening it (Epelboin *et al.* 2013: 8; Frembgen and Porter 2010: 204; Ibrahim 1987; Savage-Smith 1997: 132ff; Tanavoli n.d.). Early survivals of handwritten examples can be found among the *Geniza* documents, which are a collection of some 300 000 fragments of Jewish manuscripts found in the storehouse of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in the Fustat area of Cairo (Wasserstrom 1992: 163). These include fragments of Judaeo-Arabic (Arabic in Hebrew script) versions of Arabic magical texts, highlighting the complex interaction between Jewish and Muslim traditions in the early Islamic period. Excavations at medieval Quseir on the Red Sea have yielded amulets made of paper and cloth (Regourd and Handley 2009: 144), some revealing how Qurʾanic verses and magical signs were deployed together (Guo 2004:312), combinations still seen on modern amulets. The use of block printing for amulets, known as *tarsh*, seems to have been particularly prevalent in Egypt between the ninth to tenth centuries and the mid-fourteenth century. These paper amulets appear in a range of calligraphic styles from Kufic to cursive scripts (Bulliet 1987; D'Ottone 2013; Schaffer 2006). Two virtually identical examples dating to about the tenth century combine verses from the Qurʾan and invocations to God in a simple Kufic script (D'Ottone 2013; Regourd 2007: 130); later *tarsh* are in cursive scripts. Although there are some exceptions, these block-printed amulets do not tend to include any elements of the magical vocabulary in addition to the text, in clear contrast to the later handwritten examples which mix signs and symbols with texts – Qurʾanic or otherwise (Bulliet 1987: 437; Schaffer 2006: 194).

In the eighteenth to nineteenth century, there was a proliferation of printed paper amulets from different parts of the Islamic world. Examples from the Ottoman domains encompass a wide range of elements including stamps probably made from metal seals and impressed in red and black inks. In one group, the stamps include holy buildings such as the Maqam Ibrahim at Mecca, verses from the Qurʾan, invocations to God, and revered figures including the ancient Prophets. Another group consists entirely of elements such as the "Seven Signs" or magic squares, derived from the "magical vocabulary" (Perk 2010: 9–19).

The question of whether these paper amulets were intended to be "read" in the traditional sense must to some extent have depended on what the maker instructed the new owner, while matters of literacy also come into play here. As we saw in the West African example, mentioned above (Epelboin *et al.* 2013: 8), the recipient of the amulet was forbidden from opening it. While some texts are deliberately obfuscatory, others are so clearly written that it suggests they could have been used as a basis for incantations. In addition, printed amulets raise other questions about whether, once printed and sold, the paper amulets need to go through the hands of a "man of magic" to become "activated."[39]

The existence of the amulet seal is not an innovation of the Ottoman period but has a long history. Early Islamic examples of amulet seals are ring stones engraved with benedictory texts in reverse with no owner's name – and they confer protection on the wearer as well as on the object being stamped. An interesting example, from about the ninth century, is an amulet seal inscribed *tubna lillah* (we have repented unto God) set into a Carolingian mount (Porter and Ager 1999). Some of these amulet seals, particularly in rock crystal, are engraved with "Linear Kufic," strings of Kufic style letters with no obvious meaning. What material these were to be stamped on, if at all, is unclear. It may be that the fact of being inscribed in reverse simply gave them a mysterious magical quality (Kalus 1987; Porter 2010; Rehatsek 1880).

The amulet – as seen from the Ottoman examples – is not always engraved in positive but can in fact be in negative with the intention of stamping onto something and can therefore be considered a seal. The seal itself in this case was not believed to hold the power, this lay entirely in the object, the paper support that had been stamped. The conjunction of seal and the amulet goes even further in the Ottoman era with the frequent appearance in prayer books and talismanic shirts of seal designs. As remarked upon by Christiane Gruber,

> From books to shirts … the seal was thus transformed from a material object to a graphic sign applied to a variety of flat surfaces, where it came to function as a protective and curative device. Whether worn on the body or else carried in the

> hand, seals were interacted with in highly tactilic ways, and it is precisely through physical engagements that the power of seal designs was believed to be activated by their Ottoman viewers and carriers. (Gruber 2013: 3–4)

The amulet–seal connection in the Ottoman period is yet further emphasized by the graphic appearance of the "Seal of Prophecy" (*muhr al-nubuwwa*), a physical mark on the Prophet's shoulder blades, the words of which are included in the text known as the *hilya*, a celebrated description of the Prophet's appearance and qualities, of which there are many Ottoman examples in the form of amulets and on paper (Porter 2011: 161 no. A100). Illustrations of the "Seal of Prophecy" in prayer books include examples of where the reader is encouraged to touch the design in order "activate" its qualities (Savage-Smith 1997: 106, 116–117). This is the same with the "Sandal of the Prophet" (*naʿn al-nabi*) also "activated" by touching. In a drawing of the sandal on a hajj certificate, made for a certain woman called Maymuna in 1433, the text around it says "I rub the image of the sandal to seek the Prophet's approval" (Flood 2014: 478). Another important seal in this regard is the "Great Seal of God," also illustrated in Ottoman prayer books, where the central part contains repetitions of Allah and around the side are the names of the Archangels. In one example from a manuscript dated 1289/1872 in the New York Public Library, the accompanying text includes the phrase "Whoever reads this blessed great seal or carries it with himself or rubs it against his face in the evening and morning will be forgiven seventy years of sin" (Gruber 2013: 5).

Regional Variations of Amulets

Certain types of amulets are characteristic of particular regions: In medieval Spain, for example, lead amulets engraved with Kufic script were folded inside amulet holders (Ibrahim 1987). During the late Ottoman period there is a rise in popularity of thin gold amulets known as *maskeh*.[40] These are characterized by being similar to coins in that they are stamped with dies, sometimes the same one on both sides. Extant examples are occasionally pierced, indicating that they were sewn onto clothing. The texts include invocations to God (as God wills and so on) the "names of God," the names of the Seven Sleepers and their dog, and the aforementioned description of the Prophet Muhammad known as the *hilya* (Porter 2011: 158–163). Also striking at this period is that many of the designs on the amulets appear in other contexts: including on talismanic shirts and prayer books (Gruber 2013).

A major difficulty in the study of amulets is that many of the texts inscribed upon them are so generic that it is not always self-evident in which part of the Dar al-Islam such an amulet might have been made. The context of the acquisition of the amulet or particular characteristics within the text of the inscription itself can therefore be the key. Some amulets have clear references to Twelver Shiʿism which, during the Safavid period (1501–1722), became the official religion of Iran. The specific Shiʿi vocabulary on amulets (and indeed coins, seals, and other objects as well) consist of the names of the "Five Pure" ones: Muhammad, his son-in-law ʿAli, his daughter Fatima, and his grandsons Hasan and Husayn[41] as well as the Twelve Imams, sometimes including their attributes, who with the addition of Fatima and Muhammad are referred to as the Fourteen Immaculate Ones. Another is the phrase that is the invocation to Imam ʿAli known as the Nadi ʿAliyan (Call upon ʿAli). Although part of a longer poem, the passage that is most frequently represented is "Call upon ʿAli, manifestor of miracles, you will find him a help to you in adversity, all care and grief will clear away through your friendship, Oh ʿAli, Oh ʿAli, Oh ʿAli" (Shani 2012: 138–139). A third text, "there is no youth (*fata*) except ʿAli and no sword except for Dhu'l Faqar," refers to the split-pointed sword of ʿAli given to him by the Prophet at the battle of Badr, which itself was believed to have "magical" properties. Sometimes the sword is graphically represented, and these elements might either appear alone or complemented by Qurʾanic inscriptions (*EI*^{2} art. Dhu'l Faqar). Particularly favored among the Shiʿa are the last two *sura*s, the *mu'awadatan* (Q113 and Q114) as there was a tradition that Imam Husayn apparently wore these two *suras* around his neck before he was martyred.

However, since ʿAli is revered by both Sunnis and Shiʿis, the presence of these elements alone does not indicate sectarian affiliation (Blair 2001: 90–91). In fact, there can be Sunni or Sufi associations as well. A document published by Perk includes stamps from amulets which include hands inscribed with verses from the Qurʾan, names of God, the Four Caliphs, and the Dhu'l Faqar text. These are contiguous to stamps which refer to the Sufi Qadiri and Rifaʿi orders (Bernheimer 2013; Perk 2010: 112–113).

An interesting question posed by Ziza Vesel in her analysis of Iranian figural seals is whether it is possible to define such objects as Shiʿi when overt sectarian elements are not present. Two particular groups of amulets were being made in Iran in the past two centuries: One group is silver amulets in the form of body parts known as *nazar* (from the Arabic root to look or gaze upon) made for healing. They are cut from sheets of silver and often sold near shrines to place upon the door or grille of a shrine (Vesel 2012). Another group is cut from sheet brass and combines figural representation with elements of the "magical vocabulary." Vesel links the presence of such figures to ancient Sabaean magic, picked up by a number of writers in the early Islamic period. These included magical practices using astrology, which are to be found in the literary tradition in texts such as *Telesm Eskandariyye* (*The Talismans of Alexander*) and in the iconography of the amulets themselves (Ikhwan al-Safaʾ 2011: 116–146; Vesel 2012: 258). The function often dictates the iconography. There are amulets dedicated to love which include representations of the famous lovers Yusuf and Zulayka, entwined figures, a fish, and also an amulet known as "the gate of love" (*bab al-hubb*) (Vesel 2012: 261–266). In each case the figure is surrounded by signs and symbols.

Magic Medicinal Bowls

Magic healing bowls were produced in the Islamic world in considerable quantity from at least the twelfth century (Figure 21.8), though they are not found in the written magical literature. In origin they were probably related in some fashion to pre-Islamic Aramaic magic bowls, even though there are in fact great differences in design and function (Naveh and Shaked 1985). The latter are of clay and have spiral inscriptions invoking demons, while the Islamic ones are of metal and noticeably lacking in any reliance upon *jinn* and demons. While for the most part these bowls are made of metal, a clay example painted with ink from the Abbasid site of Samarra[42] shows evidence of continuity with pre-Islamic tradition, and examples have also been found at Susa (Joel and Peli 2005: 94–111). Islamic magic medicinal bowls are distinct among magical artifacts for a number of reasons: (a) they were not carried or worn by the sufferer (hence not an amulet); (b) they do not function continuously, as a household amulet would; (c) they were employed only when needed, yet they were of a lasting material; and (d) the early examples are far more informative as to their intended use than any other magical artifact, for the early (twelfth–fourteenth century) examples are engraved with statements giving specific therapeutic uses. In addition to Qurʾanic verses and magical writing, the early bowls were decorated with schematically rendered

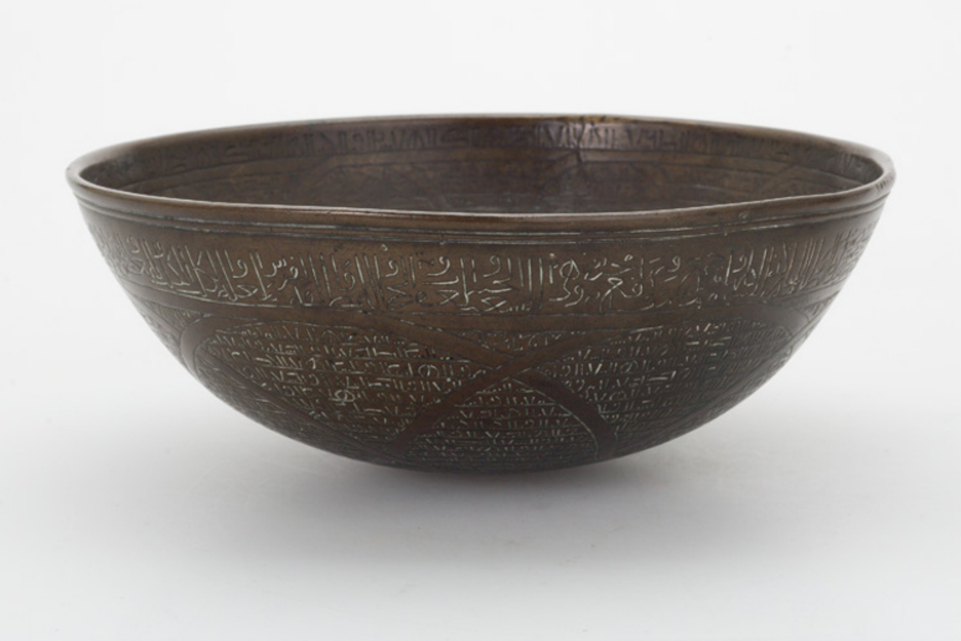

Figure 21.8 Magic medicinal bowl. Syria dated 565 (1169–1170). Height: 7.5 cm; Diameter: 19.0 cm. Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MTW 1443). Source: © Nour Foundation. Courtesy of the Khalili Family Trust.

human and animal forms. A subgroup always has representations of a scorpion, a snake (or serpent), an animal that is probably intended to be a dog (though some have called it a lion), and two intertwined pre-Mongol dragons – imagery reminiscent of the design on ninth–tenth-century Iranian amulets. This subgroup has been designated by some scholars as "poison cups," though in fact poisons and animal bites are only some of the many uses inscribed on the outside of the dish (Canaan 1936; Savage-Smith 1997: 72–105; 2003).

Talismanic Shirts

Another type of magical equipment with no counterpart in the primary written sources is the magic shirt, made of cloth and painted with magical symbols and verses from the Qur'an (Figure 21.9). The earliest preserved examples are from

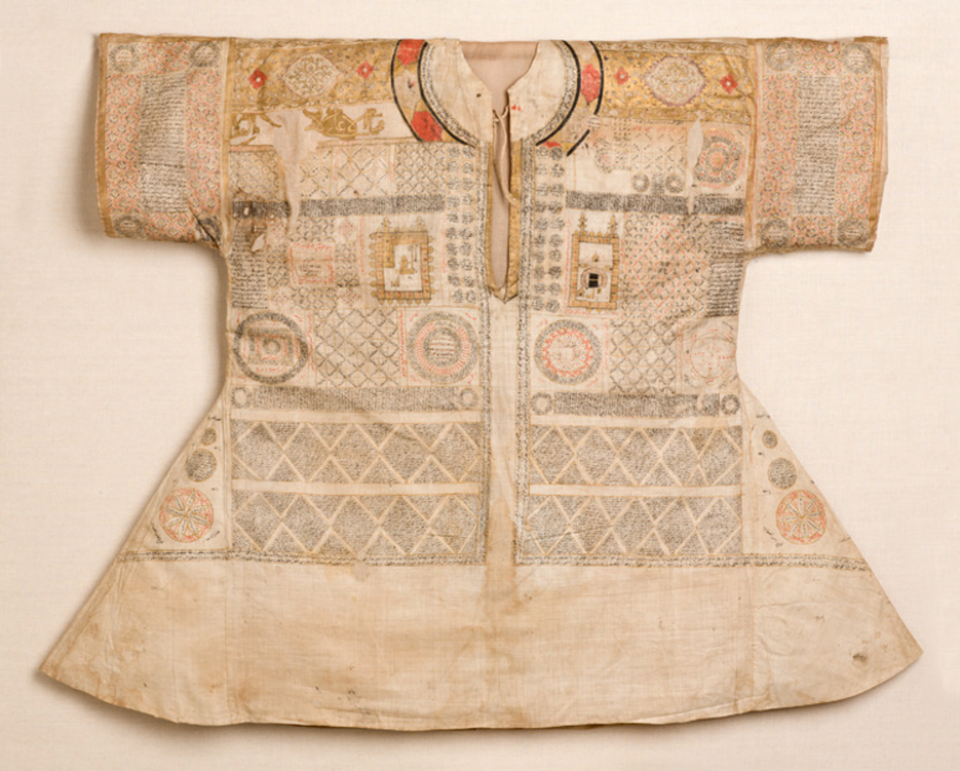

Figure 21.9 Talismanic shirt with Qurʾanic inscriptions, the phrase "There is no youth except ʿAli, no sword but Dhuʾl Faqar," groups of letters and numbers, and depictions of the sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina. Probably Deccan sixteenth–seventeenth centuries. Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (TXT 0471)). Source: © Nour Foundation. Courtesy of the Khalili Family Trust.

the fifteenth century or later and were made in the Ottoman Empire, Safavid Iran, or Mughal India. While the recorded examples preserved today are relatively recent, there was a tradition traceable to the ninth century of wearing a special shirt for curing fevers or aiding childbirth (Savage-Smith 1997: 117–123; Tezcan 2011). A remarkable Judeo-Persian talismanic textile, recently published in detail by Raya Shani, though also of recent date nonetheless reflects an ancient magical tradition traceable to Mesopotamia and moderated through Jewish and Muslim communities (Shani 1999).

The Ottoman examples are the most magnificent and elaborate, employing Latin squares and Qurʾanic verse combined with calligraphic motifs and illuminated lozenges reminiscent of ornate manuscripts. The Safavid shirts are of a different cut and design, with Shiʿi prayers and the names of the Twelve Imams written on them. While they display a more limited use of color, they often bear numerous magic squares of various types. The Mughal and Deccani talismanic shirts (Figure 21.9) are distinguished from all others by the fact that there are no magic squares, instead they generally include all 114 *sura*s of the Qurʾan, in addition to the "names of God" and the *shahada*. A fourth type of Islamic talismanic garment is represented by two items of relatively recent date: a set of undergarments made in Senegal and a sleeveless flared tunic made in Nigeria (Epelboin *et al.* 2013; Hamès and Epelboin 1992; Picton and Mack 1989).

Mirrors

Mirrors have a long history of association with magical properties (Ullmann 1992: 55–61). The shiny surface may have become associated with the arts of crystal gazing in which any reflective surface such as water or ink could be used. A number of medieval Iranian mirrors are preserved, usually from the late twelfth or thirteenth century, on which talismanic designs have been engraved upon the shiny surface (Savage Smith 1997: 128, no. 52). There is no relationship in terms of design between the two faces of these mirrors. Some of the symbols may have been placed after the mirror lost its shiny surface, in other cases the motifs are integral to the original construction of the mirror (Savage-Smith 1997: 124–131).

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that beliefs in magic were widespread throughout the medieval Islamic world and later on, permeating societies at all levels. This resulted not only in a body of literature in which a wide variety of practices was described and debated but also in the development of a particular vocabulary of motifs found on objects ranging from the simple paper amulet of an everyday nature to the luxurious talismanic shirt made for a sultan.

Notes

1 In Wahhabi contexts, for example, magical practices are banned, while in West Africa and parts of Egypt the practices are widespread. See Kruk 2005.

2 van Bladel 2009:101–102, 114; Burnett 1989; Burnett 1996: 167–169.

3 London, British Library, Delhi Arabic MS 1946.

4 Delhi Arabic 1946, fols 121v–122r, fols. 133v–134r.

5 Fierro 1996; de Callataÿ and Mo 2016.

6 Ibn Abī Uṣaibi 1996: 1, 301–302.

7 Hajji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-Ẓunūn ʿan asmāʾ al-kutub wa al-funūn*, 2 vols, Beirut n.d., vol 1, 902.

8 Fierro 1996: 906–944.

9 Tewfik Canaan suggested that the basic principle of the "lunette script" is that numbers which are 10 and over receive one or more "lunettes" to increase their numerical value. For example, 10–90 have one lunette, numbers 100–900 have two lunettes (Canaan 1937–1938: 141–143). See also the discussions in Doutté 1909, Forrest 2001, and Porter 2011: 173ff.

10 Pseudo-Majriti 1933, p. 233; Delhi Arabic 1946, fols 41r–42v.

11 Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ 2011: 5–10.

12 Istanbul, Atıf Efendi, no. 1681, fols 572v–576r; Manisa, National Library, no. 1461, 18v–5v.

13 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Fazıl Ahmad, PS 870; fols 334v–337r; Delhi Arabic 1946, fols 21v–32r.

14 Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 1–2*, ed. Nader El-Bizri (Oxford: Oxford University Press/Institute of Ismaili Studies), p. 143.

15 London, British Library, Delhi Arabic MS 1948, fol 76v, fol. 78r, fol. 94r.

16 Delhi Arabic MS 1948, fols 84v–94r, fols 134r–159v.

17 London, SOAS, 46347, fol. 70r.

18 London, SOAS, 46347, 116v–117r; Delhi Arabic MS 1948, fols 170r–202v.

19 Hajji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-Ẓunūn*, vol. 2, 1024.

20 Hajji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-Ẓunūn*, vol. 2, 989–990; Ibn Khaldūn 2000: 485.

21 Al-Buni was from Ifriqiya, which refers to the area that comprises Tunisia, western Libya, and eastern Algeria. Gardiner 2012: 86–88, 2014: 75; Francis 2005: 97–99.

22 Gardiner 2012 92; Francis 2005: 98–99.

23 Gardiner 2012: 96–98; Coloun 2013: 2, 447–512; Gril 1989; Lory 2004, 1996; Garrido-Clemente 2010; Melvin-Koushki 2012.

24 Hamadan 1985; Lory 1986.

25 Gardiner 2014: 75–76, 88–91.

26 Gardiner 2012: 102; Gardiner 2014: 6, 20, 27–30; Coloun 2013: 480–484.

27 Gardiner 2012: 96, 102–103. The authenticity of *Shams al-maʿārif wa laṭāʾif al-ʿawārif* has been the subject of debate in the theses of Gardiner and Coloun. However, both *Shams al-maʿārif wa laṭāʾif al-ʿawārif* and the later compilation (*Shams al-maʿārif al-Kubrā*) were widely copied and printed, and also most recognizable and influential even on a popular level, and thus they both warrant exploration as texts representative of the ideas and practices discussed in this article.

28 Hamès 2007, passim.

29 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS Arabe 2647, fol. 2r, fols. 4v–6r.

30 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS Arabe 2647, fols 13r–17r.

31 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS Arabe 2647, fols 20r–20v.

32 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS Arabe 2647, fols 53r–54v.

33 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), MS Arabe 2647, fol. 34v, fol. 18r, fol. 25r.

34 Paris, BnF MS Arabe 2647, pp. 15–17.

35 For several examples of ninth- and tenth-century wooden and bone amulets and spoon handles from Iran with images of this kind, see Savage-Smith 1997: 135–137.

36 The *subha* (rosary), which has 99 beads divided into three groups of 33, is used by Muslims to meditate on the names in their prayers. The names fall into a number of groups, and the usual order starts with the first 14 from Allah to al-Musawwir, which are enumerated in Qurʾan 59: 22–44. Then follow names which are grouped according to euphony or use of different Arabic roots to express different, sometimes opposite, meanings.

37 The mysterious letters of the Qurʾan and where they appear are as follows: alr, q 10, 11, 12, 14, 15; alm, q 2, 3, 29, 30, 31, 32; almr, q 13; almṣ, q 7; ḥm, q 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46; ḥmʿsq, q 42; ṣ, q 38; ṭs, q 27; ṭsm, q 26, 28; ṭh, q 20; q, q 50; khyʿṣ, q 19; n, q 68; ys, q 36.

38 For a discussion of how the term entered the English language, for example, see Warner 2012: 216. For other terms see Canaan 1937–1938: 69.

39 This is discussed in D’Ottone 2013: 70 and Hirschler 2012: 16.

40 From the Arabic verb *masaka*, to hold. Canaan attributes this to the belief that the *maskeh* “holds the foetus of the pregnant woman in situ, i.e. that such amulets prevent abortion” (Canaan 1937–1938: 70).

41 Also known as the *panj tan*, or *ahl al-bayt*, the people of the house (Kalus 1981: 71; Tanavoli n.d.: 84ff)

42 British Museum OA+.1181.a

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22

The Discovery and Rediscovery of the Medieval Islamic Object

Avinoam Shalem

> *Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society, for there is no law, whether natural or not, which forbids talking about things.*
>
> Roland Barthes (1972: 109)

Art of the Islamic Object: An Overview

In the last decade several voices in the field of Islamic art history have called for a revision and reconsideration of "Islamic" artifacts. The majority focused on the unjust attitude with which Islamic objects, and *objets d'art* in general, were treated and, in particular, classified by art historians. Several adjectives such as "minor," "decorative," and "applied" clearly perpetuated a long outmoded taxonomy, which – rooted in the historiography of the field of art history and particularly in the Eurocentric, Hegelian systematization of the visual arts under architecture, sculpture, and painting – reduced the art of the object to a marginal form of art making. As Gülru Necipoğlu has argued, the Islamic lands "continued to foreground 'object culture' more than 'image culture.'" Therefore objecthood and thingness may provide fertile ground for the historian of Islamic art (Necipoğlu 2012: 74). Similarly, Robert Hillenbrand has pointed out that, the "distinction (between the high art of architecture, sculpture and painting and the low art of all

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other arts and crafts) simply does not work in the field of Islamic art, where such media as metalwork, textiles and ceramics effortlessly claim major status" (Hillenbrand 2012: v). Kishwar Rizvi, too, has argued that Islamic art "was simply overlaid with the categories of Western art, no matter how ill-fitting the match may have been" (Rizvi 2010: 13).

Yet, for most of us objects simply exist. That is to say, we usually regard objects as accessible, existing things that have a clear presence, a tangible being, and particular uses in daily life. Objects, as compared to images or architecture, for example, have a physical reality that usually relates to our bodies. Held in the hand, they have a specific corporeal presence, which dictates a specific tendency, an aesthetic approach toward them (Boetzkes 2010; Shalem 2010). The discussion surrounding objects therefore tends to be bound to the "real," to their materiality, physicality, and manufacturing technique.

It is no wonder then that, as far as the spiritual and, indeed, transcendental character of art is concerned, objects were usually relegated to a lower, minor, secondary level. Their designation as minor explicitly underscores the status that was accorded to these tangible artifacts in the field of art history. This specific order was imposed on the arts mainly during the nineteenth century and the age of the Industrial Revolution, the same period that saw objects being preserved as relics of traditions and a distant past in what, at the time, were innovative institutions: museums for the arts and crafts in Europe, North America, and the colonies. Most art objects were – and to some extent still are – indeed displayed in such museums and rarely shown side by side with painting or sculpture, even though the latter would, in fact, be the proper category for displaying them: the case of textiles and carpets seemed to be an exception. With the establishment of the museological order for the display of objects a clear barrier was erected between "high arts" and "low arts," particularly after Vasari's influential *Lives* first published in 1550, with a revised edition in 1568. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to exhaustively discuss the substantial consequences of this division, but it should be emphasized that it superseded the classification according to artistic qualities – in other words, it was not just typological but, rather, chrono-hierarchical. The arts and crafts museums were established in order to house and document the surviving crafts of human manufacture. In this sense, they were the archival spaces where the auras of the handmade arts were assembled. Objects were recorded before their disappearance *vis-à-vis* the growing pressures of the age of machinery (Benjamin 2008). It is not surprising that the term "tradition" was immediately associated with these museums and even became, in a number of cases, part of their official names. Along with the addition of the label "tradition" a specific ideology was promoted and the collections in question were, as a result, trapped in the past, able to move forward into the contemporary sphere only to inspire modern shapes and patterns of Western art.

Owing to a significant increase in archaeological excavations in colonized regions, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century large numbers of objects reached Western museums and art markets. These finds prompted a change in approach, involving criteria beyond the aesthetic evaluation that had been common up to then. In fact the history of the discovery and rediscovery of the arts of the object in Islamic studies intersects with a longstanding Western interest in object theory in general and in the history of the "oriental" object and its ornamentation in particular. Scholars such as Riegl (1901–1923), Worringer (1921), and, more recently, Belting (2011) and Greenblatt (2010) have underscored the possible contributions of the Islamic object to novel theories on agency, mobility, and heterochronicity. And yet, the historiography of the field of Islamic art reveals that the object has been – even to this day – discussed as an accessory to architecture: the history of Islamic art is mainly told through the history of architecture. Objects in multiple media, such as ceramics, metalwork, glass, carved wood, ivories, and even textiles, are usually presented as additional visual data linked to sacred structures, palatial spaces, and profane, quotidian edifices. Most general surveys of Islamic art and architecture, in fact, tend to discuss art objects at the very end of each dynastic chapter, focusing primarily on architectural achievements. Monographs and books have, of course, been written on the arts and crafts of Islam as well, but they tend primarily to pay tribute to the collector's gaze and, in several cases, are even authored by important collectors (see, e.g., Martin 1912: 1–41; Soustiel 1985). Usually, books on Islamic arts and crafts are arranged according to the techniques and materials they were made of, conforming to collectors' taxonomies (Kühnel 1925; *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst* 1910; Migeon 1927). Such books never dare to claim a role for objects in the historical evolution of Islamic art, nor do they use their subject to illustrate past narratives for Islam; one of the rare exceptions being Robert Irwin's *Islamic Art in Context* (Irwin 1997).

It should be emphasized, though, that in the first two decades after World War II several scholars such as Richard Ettinghausen, David Storm Rice, Otto Kurz, and, to some extent, Ernst Kühnel were well aware of the important role that objects play in Islamic contexts. Articles and monographs devoted to particular objects (e.g., Ettinghausen 1961; Kurz 1975, 1977; Storm Rice 1951) exemplify this scholarly awareness. All these whispers of spring underscoring the importance of the Islamic object seemed to culminate in the mid-1970s. Swayed by the new Islamic gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Oleg Grabar (1976) called on scholars to rethink the Islamic "minor arts" as barometers of the creativity of a culture, coining the now common phrase "art of the object" (Grabar 1976: 36–43).

What Can Literary and Visual Sources Tell Us?

Recent work in Arabia suggests a culture of luxury and luxury goods that predated Islam by several centuries (Al-Ghabban *et al.* 2010). In the course of rapid and vast Arab conquests of the old "classical" world during the seventh and eighth centuries, the new Islamic empire also became exposed to new kinds of luxurious and finely crafted artifacts. The large majority of those artifacts were booty. The abundance of precious objects looted after the sack of the Sasanian royal city Ctesiphon (al-Mada'in) on the banks of the Tigris in 637 (Shalem 1994), the legendary treasures found by the conqueror Musa ibn Nusayr in 711 in Toledo, the capital city of the Visigoth kingdom (Basset 1898; Rubiera Mata 1980), and the amount of gold and silver bracelets and anklets looted in 653 in Dabiq in Sijistan by al-Rabiʿ b. Ziyad (Qaddumi 1996: 226) may serve as illustrations of this phenomenon. Though these luxury objects usually flowed into the monetary system of the new Islamic empire and served to finance military expenditures, we also know of several instances where they were divided right on the battlefield among soldiers, for example, in the case of the so-called Sasanian Spring Carpet (Bahar-i Kisra) (Shalem 1994: 78). A substantial number of luxurious goods, however, reached the caliphal treasuries in palatial or sacred spaces. Maintaining their identity as trophies of war, they were stored and sometimes even displayed for ideological purposes, mainly to underscore the sovereignty of Islam over other cultures and commemorate heroic feats from the early history of the empire.

Several other objects found their way into the world of Islam by less aggressive paths, usually as diplomatic presents and tributes from the newly conquered provinces. The account of the marvelous Indian she-camel sculpture in the Umayyad court of Hisham b. ʿAbd al-Malik (Qaddumi 1996: 68) illustrates the astonishment and admiration the art of the other elicited in those early days of Islam, a sense of wonder that even extended to the reception in Iraq of looted Indian idols (Flood 2009: 31–37). This large-scale exposure to the art object of the other cultivated the beholder's eye and contributed to its sophistication.

The so-called Marwan II ewer (Figure 22.1), a type of bronze ewer of which six examples are known so far, was manufactured in the late Umayyad period, around 750. It exemplifies the new Umayyad artistic taste for the exceptional and wonderful (King 1980; Metropolitan Museum 2011: cat. 7; Sarre 1934). This ewer, which may even be a cheaper version of royal Umayyad objects made of gold and silver, reveals an aspiration toward the miraculous in the production of the object. In today's terms the ewer can be described as surrealistic. Several distinct parts have been combined to form a functional drinking vessel: a globular body suggesting a central architectural structure, a narrow and slender neck capped, like a king, by a lavish crown, a spout in the shape of a three-dimensional crowing rooster that lets the liquid flow through its open beak, and a magnificent crozier-like rod with flourishes that, affixed to the top of the ewer's neck and the upper part of its globular body, appears as an autonomous object. This surrealistic assemblage is astonishing: an artistic invention of the unreal aimed at presenting the object as a materialized fantasy.

The early Abbasid period (*c.* 750–1000) saw an emerging interest in collecting objects of art and, more importantly, appreciating these objects aesthetically.

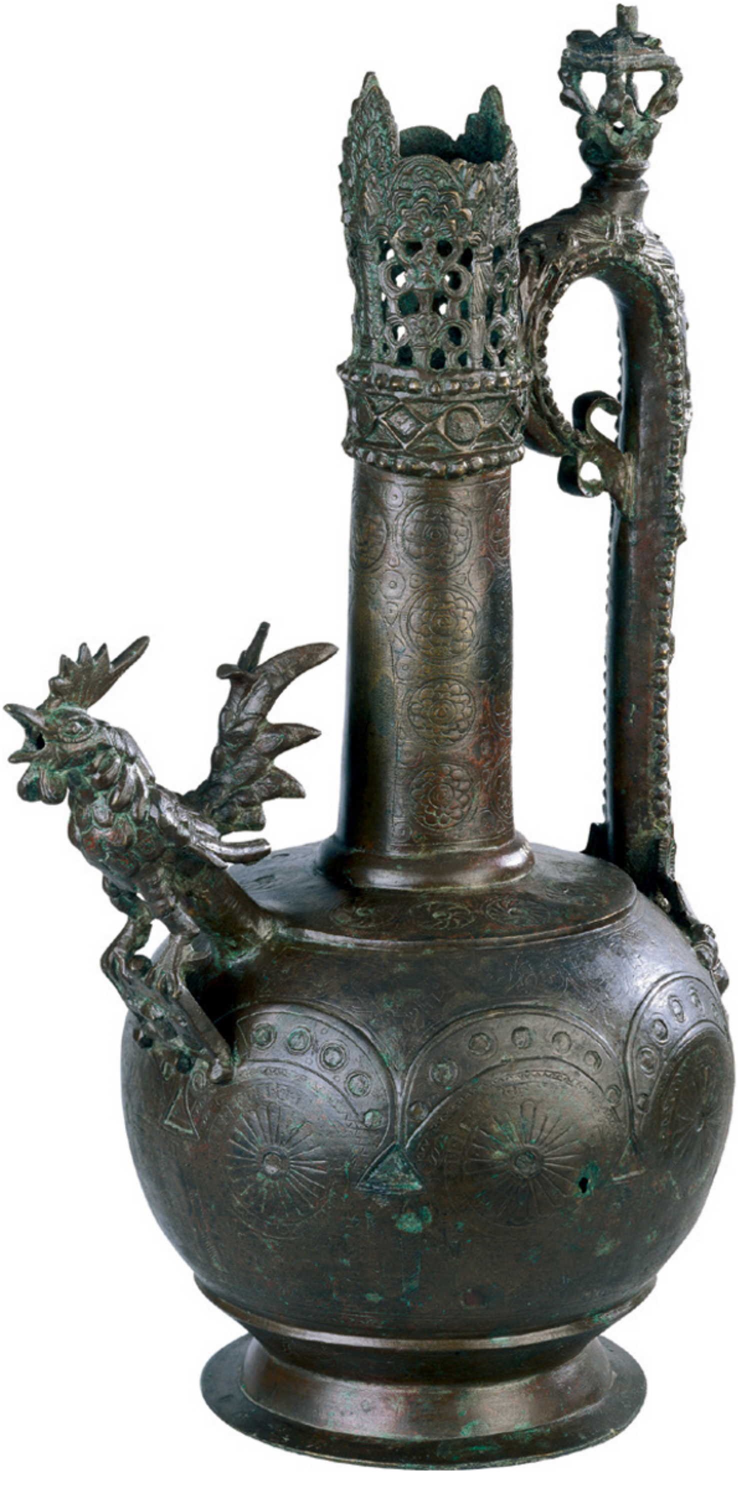

Figure 22.1 The so-called Marwan II ewer. Bronze cast and pierced. Syria eighth–early ninth century. Source: Cairo, Museum of Islamic art, acc. no. MIA 9281. Dimensions: height 41 cm, diameter max. 28 cm.

Al-Biruni (d. 1048), for example, describes the expensive rock crystal vessels kept in the treasury of Muhammad ibn Tahir, the last Tahirid governor of Khurasan (deposed 873), in Nishapur (Kahle 1936: 339–340). Al-Suli (880–946) (1935: 20) considers the Abbasid caliph al-Radi (r. 934–940) as one of the great rock crystal collectors of his time, and al-Amin, the son of Harun al-Rashid (r. 809–813), as a rock crystal collector, who did not flinch from stealthily taking the famous Qulayla rock crystal lamp from the Great Mosque of Damascus to Baghdad (Shalem 1994: 2).

Al-Jahiz (d. 869) in his *Kitab al-Bukhala'* (Book of Misers) presents numerous accounts that provide us with almost exhaustive information on the material culture of Arab society in the early Abbasid period. His observations on the lighting system of glass oil lamps reveal his scrutinizing eye and appreciation of the particular effects of fire and glass (Al-Jahiz 1997: 17–18; Grabar 2005). A focus on materiality and the specific properties of materials that objects are made of can be found in a wide range of medieval Arabic sources. The following account by the biographer Ibn Khallikan (1211–1282) suggests a very sophisticated sense of materials and their meanings. For instance, when a rock crystal inkwell inlaid with corals was given as a present to the vizier Ibn Hubayra from Baghdad, known as ʿAwn al-Din (1117–1174), some poets present at this occasion were asked by Ibn Hubayra to compose on the spot a piece of poetry about the object. One of them recited the following lines:

> Your inkstand was made of your two days, and these have been mistaken for crystal and for coral.
>
> One is your day of peace, which is white and pours forth abundance;
> The other is your day of war which is red, like red blood
> (Ibn Khallikan 1970: vol. 4, 121).

Al-Masʿudi (d. 956), in his famous book *Meadows of Gold*, tells us about a ceremony at the royal Abbasid court that involved a necklace of black and white pearls, which was regarded as a symbol for the transfer of power and the responsibility to guard the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina on account of its colors, black being the color of the Abbasid caliphs (Al-Masʿudi 1989: 290). The ability to read materials and colors as having specific meanings, that is, to interpret materials and artifacts symbolically, suggests that what we today call the field of iconography was not limited in medieval Islam to the meaning of images but also included the material and color of objects (cf. Raff 1994).

It is likely that this interest in color, materials, and visual effects was primarily driven by a curiosity and desire for the unique and exceptional. As in the case of early medieval collections, there may not have been a clear distinction between marvel and art: artifacts were amassed and stored together with flora and fauna and minerals, not unlike the encyclopedic cabinets of wonder and curiosities of the Renaissance. This blurred boundary between art and nature underscored the beauty of the cosmos and God as its sole “artisan.”

And yet, the fascination with *ʿajāʾib* (wonders) gave birth to what can be described as an innovative concept of aesthetics, in which the experience of amazement took center stage (Rabbat 2006). It involved masterly artisans creating objects of art that were not easily grasped and understood by the eye, thereby leaving the beholder speechless. The level of craftsmanship in such objects almost seemed beyond human skill, for instance, through the imitation of materials by means of other materials and media, or by including fantastic motifs and imaginary creatures. Thus the beholder was deceived and frustrated in his ability to distinguish between the real and its depicted image. As Berlekamp (2011) argues, this aesthetic pleasure of wonder was meant, especially in the Mongol and the Ilkhanid periods, to praise the beauty of God’s creation and declare the cosmic order as divine. Thus, it is perhaps possible that the religious–aesthetic concept of wonder might have influenced artistic production in the pre-Mongol Abbasid caliphate as well. A case in point are the glazed Abbasid-era ceramics decorated to perfection with elegant, floriated Kufic inscriptions, one of the finest examples being the tenth-century Nishapur bowl at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Rogers Fund, 1965 65.106.2) (Figure 22.2). Covered with a thin white and shiny glaze, the appearance of this ceramic dish resembles that of fine Chinese porcelain. The slow and confident movement of the calligrapher’s hand can readily be traced along the curved and angular lines of the various Arabic letters: it is almost as if the artist wanted to make us aware of the performative aspect of the plate’s calligraphic decoration. The circular inscription accentuates the plate’s borders and protectively encloses the central inner space, while inviting tactile contact in order to read the text (Metropolitan Museum of Art 2011: cat. no. 67).

It is quite possible that the sensitivity and competence of medieval beholders of the Abbasid period to enjoy objects of art in this particular way was related to *wasf* poetry (*wasf* literally means description, or *ekphrasis*), especially of the ninth century. At this time a new literary form emerged of “describing” a single object as the main subject of a poem, which included metaphorically comparing objects to human beings. The most famous Arabic poet to attribute human characteristics to objects was al-Maʾmuni (935–993) of Baghdad. In his poems he compares, for example, a pair of scissors with two inseparable spouses and a basket with a devout servant (Bürgel 1965). The tenth-century poet Abu al-Fath Mahmud (b. Muhammad) b. al-Husayn b. Shahak, known as al-Kushajim, who was born in Ramla in Palestine and spent his life in Mosul and Aleppo, was likewise in the habit of comparing artifacts to human beings and vice versa (Giese 1981: 175). In a tenth-century book on gifts, the author Ibn al-Marzuban compares a black ebony inkwell to a black female in whose belly the calligrapher’s feathers stand like lances (Sadan 1987: 96).

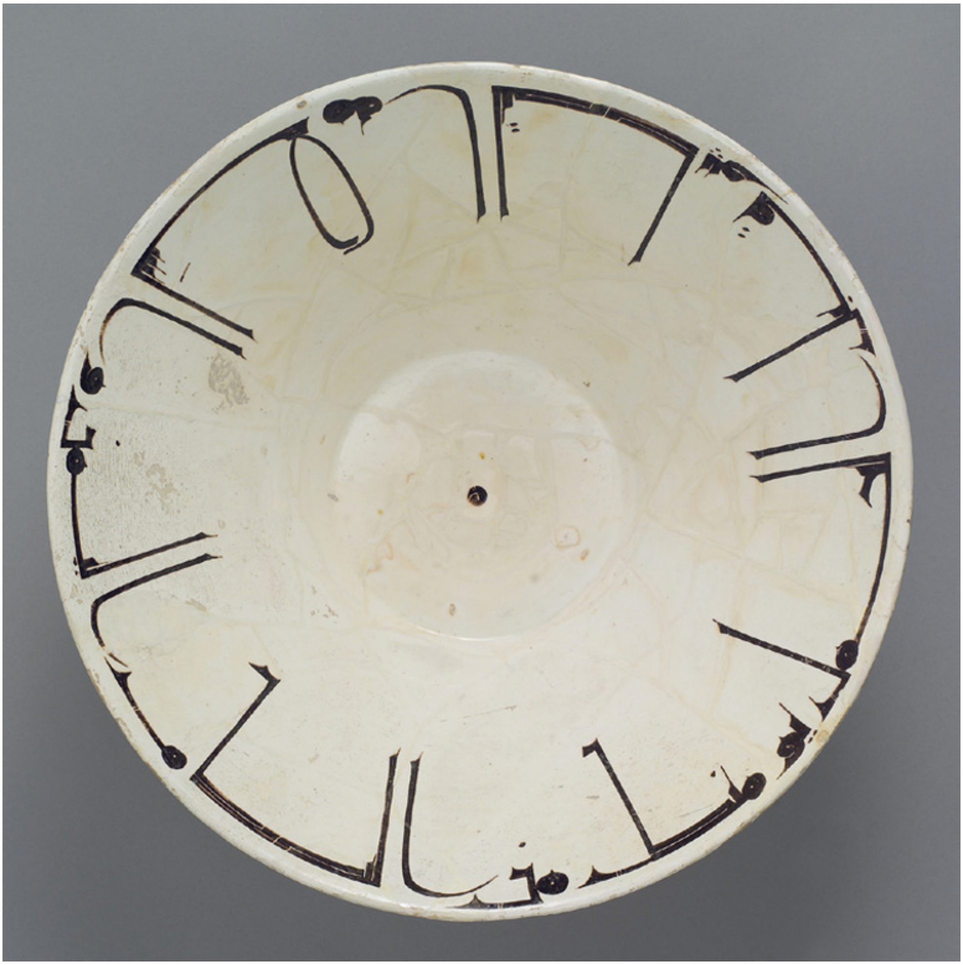

Figure 22.2 Earthenware, white and black slip decoration under transparent glaze. Iran, Nishapur, tenth century. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Roger Fund 1965, acc. no. 65.106.2. Dimensions: height 17.8 cm, diameter 45.7 cm.

Nothing illustrates this tendency toward animation in dealing with objects of art better than the famous Andalusian cylindrical ivory pyxis dated 966 and signed by its maker, Khalaf (Figure 22.3). It is inscribed with some poetical verses, carved in Kufic script around the base of its domed lid that address the beholder as follows: “The sight I offer is of the fairest, the firm breast of a delicate maiden. Beauty has invested me with splendid raiment that makes a display of jewels. I am a receptacle for musk, camphor, and ambergris.” The cylindrical pyxis seems to address the beholder quite directly, identifying itself as “I” *vis-à-vis* “you.” By establishing this dialogue between object and spectator/user it directs – if not dictates – the train of thought its intended male beholder should follow, even

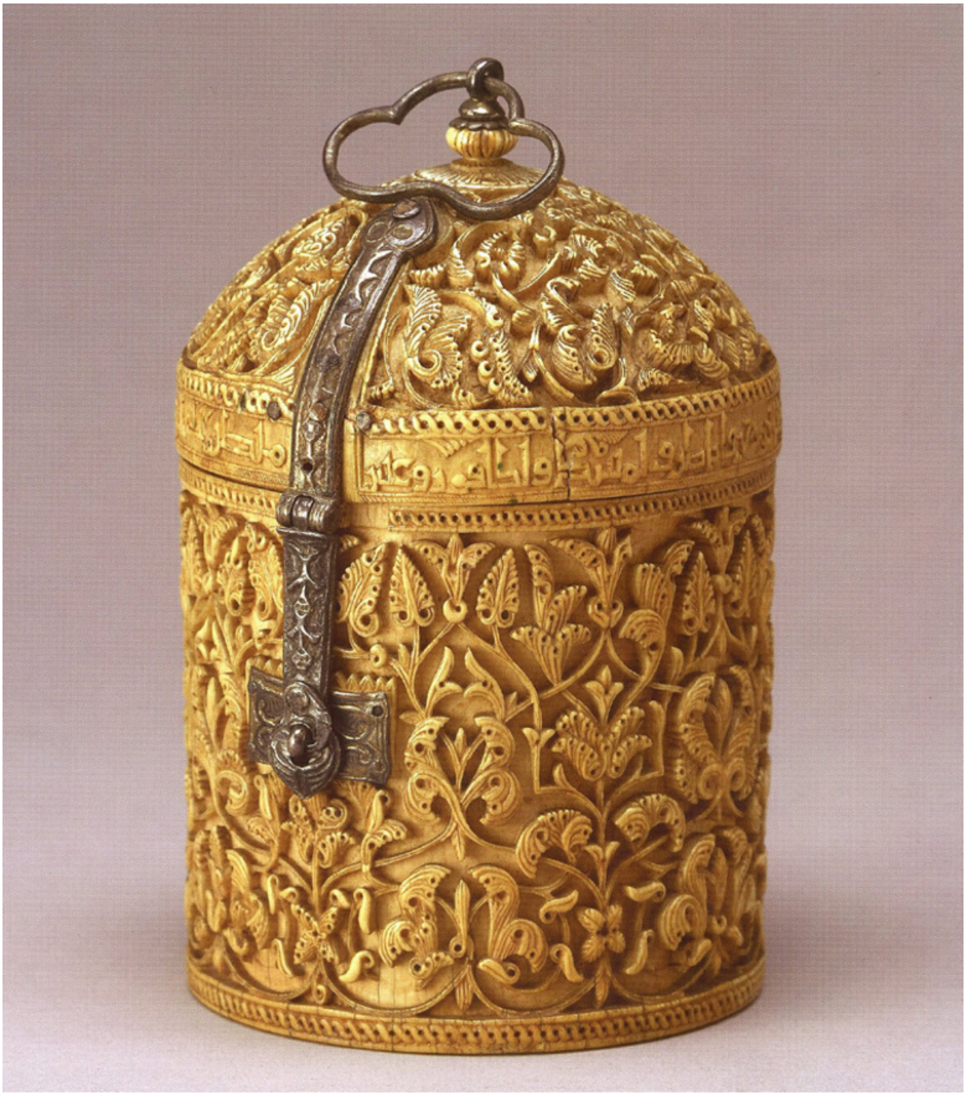

FIGURE 22.3 Carved ivory pyxis. Cordoba, dated 966 CE. The Hispanic Society of America, D 752. Source: At present on loan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (L. 2011.46.7).

pointing him to the erotic associations of ivory, which probably derive from the white, spotless color of this material, the box's smooth surface, and perhaps its curved domed lid. The aesthetic experience ends, however, with a rather descriptive sentence about the object's function (Folsach and Meyer 2005: cat. no. 14; Kühnel 1971: cat. no. 28; Shalem 2010).

Scholarly historical treatises on precious treasures and treasuries of the Islamic world offer clear evidence of the great esteem artifacts were held in. *The Book of*

Gifts and Rarities (*Kitab al-hadaya wa al-tuhaf*), a late eleventh-century treatise ascribed to Qadi al-Rashid ibn al-Zubayr, is a treasure trove of information about the material culture of the Arabs from the period immediately preceding Islam to the Fatimid era. The book is a unique piece of literature. It is an amazing source for the biographies of famous artifacts kept in different treasuries of Muslim rulers. Characterizing the objects in this book as individuals – they sometimes even bear personal names as do palatial buildings – the author tries to trace their adventurous stories, their biographies. We learn, for example, how specific objects looted by the Arabs from the treasuries of the Sasanian kings reached the royal court of the Umayyads and later fell into the hands of the Abbasids; how objects moved from one court to another and what meaning and importance they gained or lost over the centuries. The grouping of famous objects based on their courtly functions or fates points to the author's understanding of the object as storyteller. The history of the Muslim communities is thus brought alive through the accounts of artifacts (Qaddumi 1996).

We find a somewhat similar approach to the *Book of Gifts and Rarities* in the writings of the famous eleventh-century scholar al-Biruni (d. 1048). His treatise *Kitab al-jamahir fi maʿrifat al-jawahir* (Comprehensive Knowledge on Precious Stones) includes a remarkable introduction about stories linked to specific jewels mentioned in the book. He states, "I shall also try to include everything that I have learnt from the jewelers, although the so-called famous stories of the jewelers are tinged with the fiction of the storytellers and the gossip of the bazaar. This falsehood is of such magnitude as to stun heaven and earth." Thus each chapter about a different precious stone includes, in addition to typical information concerning the stone's natural history, a section devoted to stories associated with the stone in question. These stories place the jewels in their social context and provide us with that marvelous biographies of famous objects from antiquity and the medieval world, including the ruby *al-Jabal* (the mountain), the splendid pearl *al-Yatima* (the orphan) (Shalem 1997: 42–56), the so-called *al-Azima* (the firm or solid), the huge emerald called *al-Bahr* (the sea; on account of its color), the Table of Solomon, the Golden Date Tree of the Sasanians, and other fabulous objects.

The tension or charged relationship between form, function, and materials, which may be the most important factor contributing to the aesthetic appeal of any artifact, seems to be apparent in medieval Islam as well – at least in the writings of al-Biruni. In his book on mineralogy, he explains,

> An object that really affords pleasure is that which, despite constant use, still keeps its user avid for obtaining more of it. Such are the pleasures dictated by the senses that, whenever they come across a new object, the senses impinge upon it with delight.

He even adds,

> But (a constant habituation to pleasure) is likely to render the animating spirit dull and, once the senses become disturbed, the animating spirit, being worn out, cannot derive pleasure from (these objects). (Al-Biruni 1989: 13)

The permanent “conflict” between decoration and form and the tension between a vessel’s inner and outer parts, especially in the case of sealed or lidded caskets, augment the particular aesthetic experience *vis-à-vis* objects, compounding it with the desire on the part of the beholder to discover the inside and contents of any closed container. The particular decoration on the casket’s outer walls is usually interpreted as hinting at the value of the material enshrined within. Al-Biruni quotes Ismaʿil b. ʿAli, who is clearly aware of this aspect: “[Like] the sides of the chests which were decorated with variegated patterns. He who fell in love with those patterns thought the chest would contain all kinds of jewels. But only the emergence of air [greeted] the opener after the lock had been prized open” (Al-Biruni 1989: 62).

Ismaʿil b. ʿAli describes a typical aesthetic experience in the face of a locked and closed container: his joy at looking at the casket’s outer decorated walls is mingled with the desire to open it. The notion of hiding and concealing and the understanding of outer and inner surfaces of a box, as exemplified by al-Biruni’s account, may also be linked to the antithetic aesthetic concepts of the perceptible, visible and manifest, the *zahir*, and the inner, hidden, invisible and, indeed, esoteric, the *batin*, in medieval Islam. *Zahir* and *batin* are, however, usually associated with philosophical theories of metaphysics and, in particular, with the concept of the sublime beauty of God. In contrast, the decorated hidden areas on the inner or reverse sides of caskets were, in my opinion, also part of the phenomenological world of visual experience. Because these areas, though concealed, are meant to be exposed to the beholder’s eye at a specific and rather intimate moment, their perception is simultaneously sensuous and cognitive, one that gives pleasure to the mind and body. A discussion of the “Superiority of the Belly over the Back” in one of al-Jahiz’s essays may contribute to a better understanding of the aesthetic appreciation of the front and back of an object and the distinction made between the two. Al-Jahiz uses the example of papyrus: “Inside comes first. The belly of papyrus scroll is better than its back. The belly of a sheet of paper is the useful part of it, not its back. One writes with the belly of a pen not its back. One cuts with the belly of the knife and not its back” (1988: 169).

Rediscovering the Object

Judging from the surviving visual material at hand, it is likely that a shift in the perception of objects of art occurred around the year 1000. A new aesthetic approach is already evident in finely painted inscriptions on Samanid pottery that call the beholder’s attention, as Oya Panacaroğlu argues, to “aesthetic pleasures and ethical precepts” (Panacaroğlu 2002). While art historical scholarship on medieval Western art around 1000 tends to points to the emergence of the artist's identity and the appearance of his signature as major indicators of a shift in the perception of art in the Latin West, the change in the medieval Islamic world involved the active involvement of the beholder in the aesthetic experience. As a result, the artifact became, as it were, "cognizant" of the observer's gaze, and the beholder took on a no less essential role in the discovery of the artifact as a source of pleasurable aesthetic experience. It is true that signatures of artisans working in various media already appeared in the earliest period of Islamic art. It is also true that earlier writers, like al-Washsha (d. 937) or al-Suli (d. 946), were much concerned about appropriate taste and cultivated and refined style. They therefore contributed to the formation of a conscious and exquisite aesthetic in the Abbasid court. But the formation of the presence of the beholder as vital to the course of the aesthetic experience seems to have been a later development.

The period after 1000 saw the emergence of a wider range of patrons, including court officials, bureaucrats, scribes, merchants, and sellers of goods, who might have been more eager to make their presence visible in this new rearrangement of Abbasid society. While in the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods works of art were usually produced at and commissioned by the caliphal courts (with the exception of ceramics), the rise of a new "bourgeoisie" within the Muslim world informed the traditional system of art production (see Contadini, CHAPTER 17). The new patrons, including merchants, began to sponsor art making and particularly commission luxury objects. They were, as Ettinghausen (1956) and Grabar (1984, 2006) have speculated, eager to see their own image reflected in the art objects they commissioned. As a result, the iconographic repertoire, which had consisted up to then of sacred and royal symbols and imagery, expanded. Scenes of urban daily life, like those depicted in twelfth- and thirteenth-century illustrated texts such as the *Maqamat* of al-Hariri, frequently included images of the new urban upper middle class patrons (O'Kane 2012; Tabbaa, CHAPTER 12, and Contadini, CHAPTER 17). With regard to the Fatimid art of Egypt, moreover, depictions of daily life scenes and even nature started to show a strong penchant for realism, which were usually manifested through anecdotal settings and an accentuated impressionistic gaze. These are exemplified by a bowl with a cock-fighting scene in the Keir Collection in Dallas or a drawing on paper of a man being devoured by a lion in the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris (Institut du Monde Arabe 1998: 101, cat. no. 19; Suleman 2013).

This aesthetic change may likewise be linked to the desire of patrons to replace the symbolic/emblematic character of royal art with more common and relatively realistic upper middle class imagery (Ettinghausen 1956). It might be suggested that this social transformation constituted the ground for the beholder (sometimes referred as the owner, *sahib*) to become an integral, almost tangible, part of the aesthetic experience of the art object.

Even before 1000, the active Abbasid trade with China and India, and the mobility of people and objects either by sea or land, created a new, expanded context for luxury art objects. In addition to objects of piety – that is, ritual or votive artifacts commissioned for sacred spaces – or feats of high-class workmanship produced for courtly amazement (such as diplomatic gifts), these luxurious commodities were now objects that promoted diverse strata of patronage with differing codes of decorum. Their buyers, the new upper middle class, could proclaim through the novel and glamorous aesthetic of these artifacts their own prestigious status within society. Artifacts became objects of esteem: they were supposed to project extravagance and wealth, but at the same time it was essential that they remained affordable. Thus brass vessels densely decorated with pierced and engraved patterns appear as if made of pure gold and silver (see, e.g., the incense burners from eastern Iran, like the one in the Louvre AA19). Similarly, overglazed pottery was covered with painted decoration in gold luster (like the figurine in the form of a camel from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection in London POT 857), cut glass objects recall finely carved objects of semi and precious stones (see the turquoise cut glass bowl in the treasury of San Marco in Venice), and painted ivory caskets imitated the decoration of carved ivory boxes (Berlin, Museum of Islamic Art KFMV 60). Some of this substitution of materials may be attributed to hadith discouraging the use of luxury substances (Ghabin 1987), but labels such as “intermedia” or “transmaterial” can be used to characterize this type of artistic production. Made of less expensive materials, objects still projected a sense of the exclusive and luxurious. The art of replicating and translating shapes, motifs, and colors from one material to another fostered artistic ingenuity (Allan 1986; Shalem 2012; Watson 1986; also Watson, CHAPTER 19).

Equally relevant is the establishment of the Crusader kingdoms in the Levant at the end of the eleventh century, after which the whole trade system of the Mediterranean basin underwent a major transformation. Caravan routes, centers of trade, and even the speed of trade traffic and the quantity of merchandise changed. Apart from well-known shifts in the naval hegemony over the Mediterranean Sea and the emergence of the northern Italian city states of Genoa and Pisa, perhaps the major difference was the establishment of a Christian monopoly over the Levantine ports of Syria and Palestine. This new situation gave the Latin West direct access to the Near East and soon European traders settled in main trade and port cities of the Levant. No less important was the new, prominent role of the city of Palermo as a result of the consolidation of Norman rule in Sicily and parts of southern Italy, particularly in the second half of the twelfth century. Sicily’s geographical location at the heart of the Mediterranean basin and the new political situation that gave crusaders, pilgrims, and traders considerably more freedom of movement combined to lift Palermo into a key position (see Kapitaikin, CHAPTER 15).

These changes in the Mediterranean economy and medieval commercial interests have been widely discussed by historians and sociologists. Art historians, on the one hand, have thus far been much less concerned with general questions regarding the fundamental changes in the production of Islamic artifacts during this period. Attempts to identify new types of Islamic artifacts made for export during the era of the Crusades generally focus on the changes in the taste of buyers and the emergence of a new aesthetic mode, consisting mainly in adapting objects to European tastes. For this purpose shapes were modified and motifs were added to their decorative program that Christian buyers were familiar with. Objects incorporating Christian scenes, such as scenes of the Nativity, Baptism, Presentation in the Temple, and Entry into Jerusalem, which appear on the inlaid canteen from the Freer Gallery of Art exemplify this new aesthetic, whether or not it was made for a Crusader, or even Christian, patron (Ecker and Fitzherbert 2012; Fitzherbert 2012; see Redford and Hoffman, CHAPTER 16). Later on, especially during the Mamluk period, it even became common to include specific European blazons in their décors (Hoffman 2004; Ward 2007).

However, no less important than changes in patronage in the Levant during the era of the Crusades and the emergence of a "bourgeoisie" was the need to improve and expedite artistic techniques and alter working procedures and modes of trade, which likewise affected the aesthetics of objects. A case in point is the so-called group of "Siculo-Arabic" painted ivories; as noted by several scholars, they were made in an extremely hasty and cheap way (Knipp 2011; Pinder-Wilson and Brooke 1973; Shalem 2007). These caskets with very thin sheets of ivory were "insecurely assembled and painted in a summary fashion with unstable pigments" (Pinder-Wilson and Brooke 1973: 293). Yet the artifacts were designed to conceal the fact that they are inferior products and draw the beholder's attention to their shiny ivory surfaces or striking painted colors enhanced by gold. Thus, while the Mediterranean trade expanded in order to meet the needs of a larger group of buyers, precious and exclusive objects made way for semi- or pseudo-precious ones and adjectives such as "real" and "unique" yielded to characterization such as "impressive" or "imposing." In some cases, the decorative program consisted of wild and fantastic animals, thus enhancing attractiveness (see, e.g., the densely gold-painted ivory box from the Victoria and Albert Museum (4535-1859) or the enameled glass beaker from the British Museum in London, 1879 5-22 68).

At the same time, the Syrian and Egyptian production of traded luxury goods during the Crusade era can be associated with the emergence of an original aesthetic, characterized by a freehand line that suggests a remarkable self-confidence on the part of the artisans; see, for example, the contours of the two birds on both sides of the back side of the casket at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 22.4). We also find this liberated, rapid line on enameled glass objects from the era of the Crusades as well as on late Ayyubid and early Mamluk Syrian ceramics, the so-called Raqqa wares, characterized by their vivid black decoration under transparent blue enamel (see, e.g., the piece in the Louvre Museum in Paris MAO 300). Overall, the migration of the art object from the court to the free market was accompanied by commercial considerations. The main aim of the mercantile sphere was to present the object as attractive to increase its sale price and value, despite the fact that the object was either made in a less careful artistic technique and/or as part of a serial production. The commercial notion

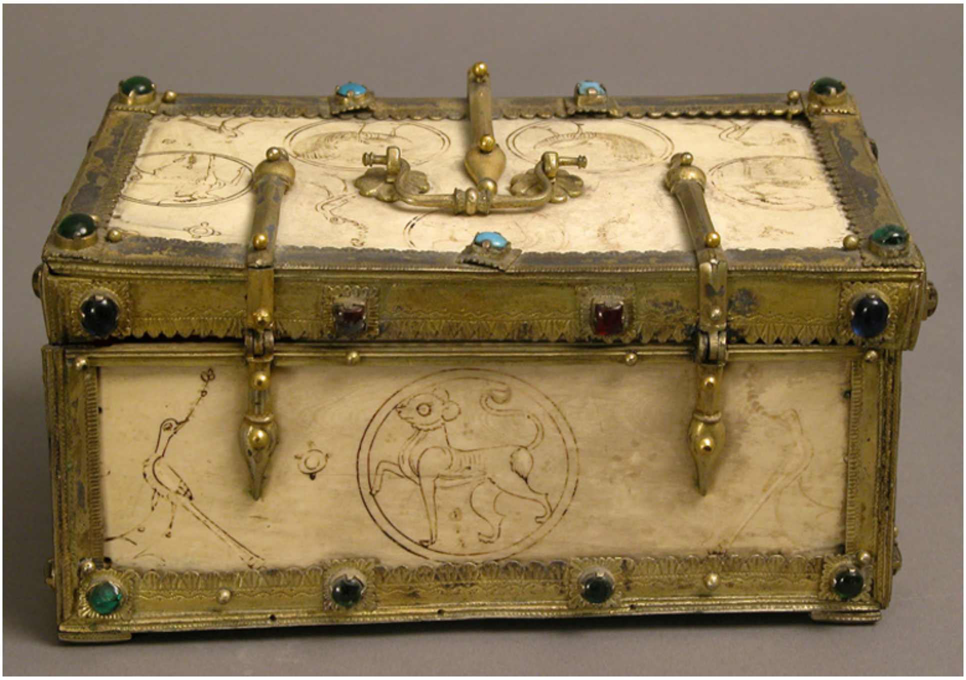

FIGURE 22.4 Painted ivory box. Probably Norman Sicily or Italy, thirteenth century. Mounting: gilded silver and semi precious and glass stones. Dimensions: length 17.1 cm, depth 10 cm. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Alastair Bradley Martin, acc. no.1973.90.

contributed to its new position as an object of desire and individual possession, a marker of the identity to which its owner aspired.

The aspect of mobility seems to have consistently contributed to the characterization of the art object as object. As artifacts started to pass from one culture to another, the concept of the strange and exotic developed and objects "acted" as markers of identities (Cutler 2000; Grabar 1997; Hoffman 2001; also Redford and Hoffman, CHAPTER 16). By contrast, the specific Western view of the art of the other involved a different kind of appreciation: the beholder "marveled," and unable, sometimes, to decode the meaning of the Islamic object's decoration or, indeed, shape, focused on its aesthetic virtues. This probably coincided with the appreciation of the Islamic object as one of spectacular craftsmanship. At the same time, however, the postulated difference between the beholder and the other established "othering" as a system of aesthetic perception. Since numerous Islamic objects were accepted into church treasuries in Europe and combined with others, or provided with new mounts in order to fabricate new works of art, the crucial question is whether this practice can be understood as a method of control, of domesticating the beautiful other. Western regard for the alien system of thought manifest in objects not only served the need of understanding and systematizing the world in a negative–positive scheme but also created space for constructing the identity of the other. Hence, Islamic objects could be associated with demonic powers and with "exotic," healing, or magical qualities, creating a particularly ambiguous and unintelligible space for the object of the "other," that – if only apparently – eluded control by its beholder.

This is the case with what is, perhaps, the most spectacular Islamic metalwork in the Latin West, the huge metal sculpture of the griffin kept at the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Pisa (Figure 22.5). The body of the griffin is cast in a single piece and its two wings are attached to its front legs (Balafraj 2012; Contadini, Camber, and Northover 2002). The griffin was probably installed on top of the gable of the cathedral's eastern façade during the late eleventh century and remained there until 1828, the year it was put on display in the Camposanto. The original function of this piece in its Muslim context is not known, and scholarly debate concerning its provenance continues. Basing his arguments on the calligraphy and the incised decoration on the griffin's body, Melikian-Chirvani (1968) argued for an Iranian origin. Jenkins (1978) suggested that it reached Pisa after the sack of Mahdiyya in North Africa in 1087 and mentioned other possible routes to Pisa, such as the aftermath of the sack of Palermo in 1063, the sack of Almeria in 1089, or even the pillage of the Balearic Islands between 1113 and 1114. In any case, a west Mediterranean origin seems to have been accepted by most scholars. In fact, the original cultural biography of this object appears to have vanished into oblivion, which opened up a large space to fill with fantastic local folklore and exotic associations. The "second life" of the griffin in its new Christian, public urban context and that of numerous other Islamic art works reused in the medieval church treasuries of the Latin West (Shalem 1996) contributed to the discovery of the aesthetic merits of the Islamic artifact and its ability to conjure memories, real or contrived.

Conclusion: Future Directions

This brief introduction to the field of the art of the Islamic object illustrates a marked shift in recent scholarly interest. The collector's or connoisseur's gaze that used to dictate the classification of the "applied" arts of Islam according to materials has made way for a focus on historical questions regarding patronage, artistic production, social functions, identity, and aesthetic observations involving the interaction between object and beholder. The gamut of artifacts could be reorganized to suggest new histories and varied narratives that go beyond formalistic queries and, more importantly, may lead to a reevaluation of literary sources. The recent global turn highlights the intercultural biographies of circulating Islamic objects, and it is likely that new art historical approaches, such as those associated with the sensory turn and especially those related to optics, will encourage novel discussions of the masterpieces of Islamic art.

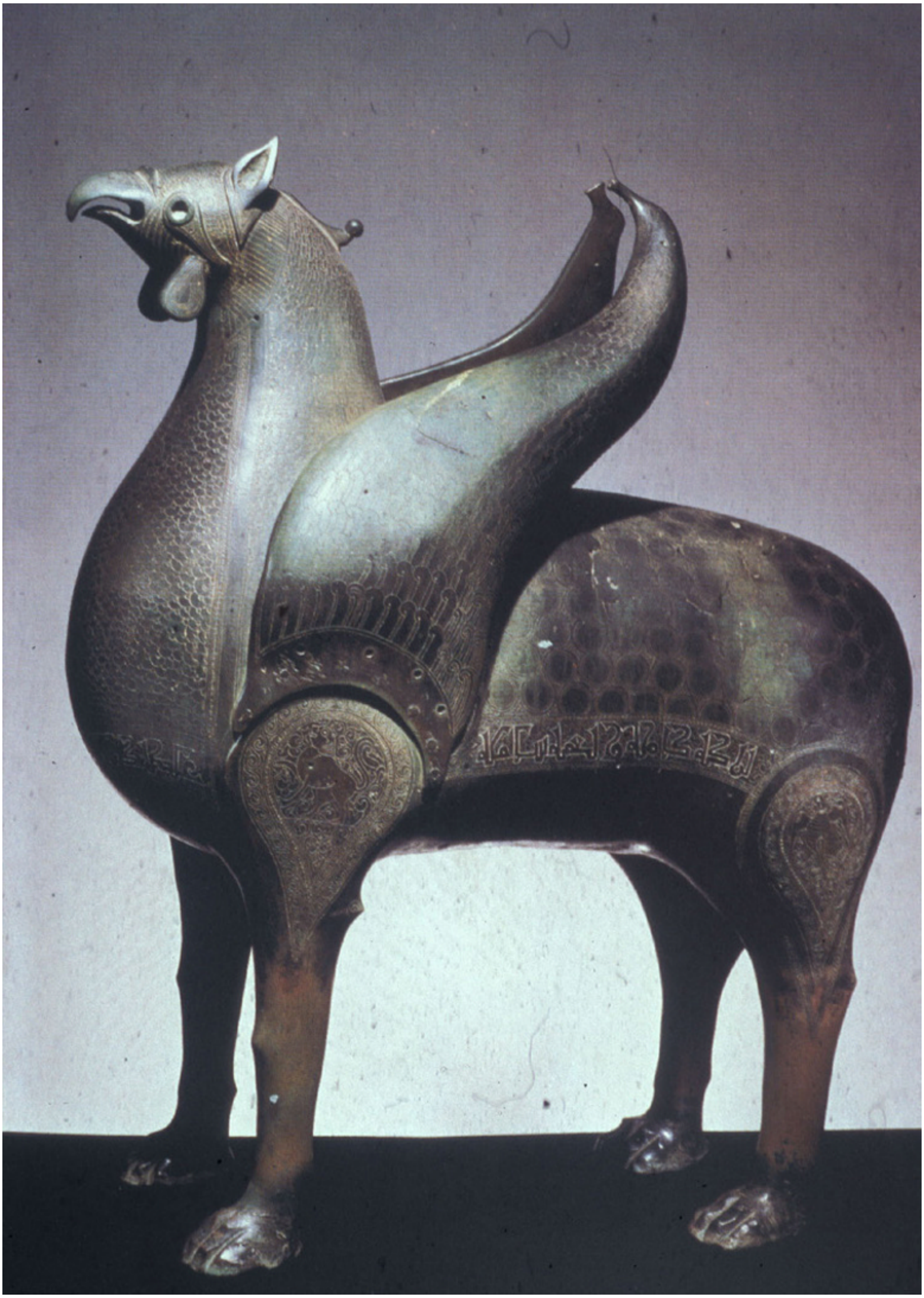

Figure 22.5 The so-called Pisa griffin. Provenance uncertain, *c*. 1000. Dimensions: height 107 cm; length 87 cm; width 43 cm. Source: Pisa, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, acc. no. 1/32. Reproduced with permission.

Moreover, the critical approach taken by art historians examining the historiography of the field might well result in a reclassification of material culture. For instance, historians of Islamic art seem to have completely neglected the category of sculpture, one of the major categories of Western art history. Revisiting the object with these issues in mind will provide a welcome corrective to the common and still prevailing cliché of Islamic aniconism (Flood 2002) and may even help redraw borders and identify overlaps between the "minor arts" and sculpture. The anthropomorphic line of art historical research has already introduced some new approaches to the field (see *Art Bulletin* 2012: 10–31). The large corpus of Islamic objects decorated with various types of inscriptions is likely to provide a fertile ground for a study of the object along such lines. Since objects of Islamic art have mainly been collected and exhibited by museums and private collections, it is to be expected that the history of display, restoration, and provenance will also come to the fore. Such studies can shed new light on various questions regarding perception, imagination, and even the dating of objects.

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Volume II
From the Mongols to Modernism

Edited by

Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu

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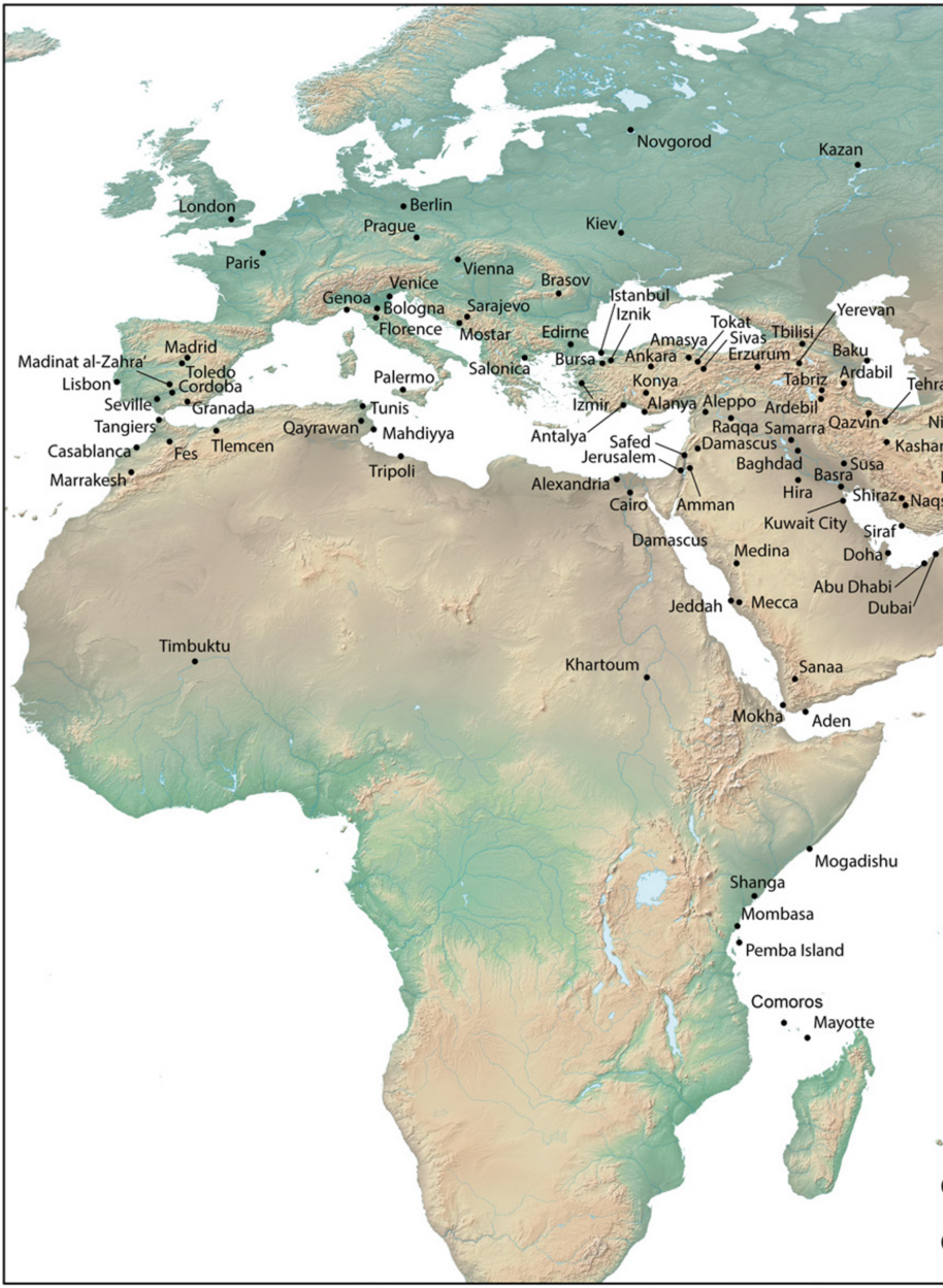
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Baghdad
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Tripoli
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Amman
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Siraf
Damascus
Medina
Doha
Abu Dhabi
Jeddah
Mecca
Dubai
Timbuktu
Khartoum
Sanaa
Mokha
Aden
Mogadishu
Shanga
Mombasa
Pemba Island
Comoros
Mayotte

Map of commonly cited cities.
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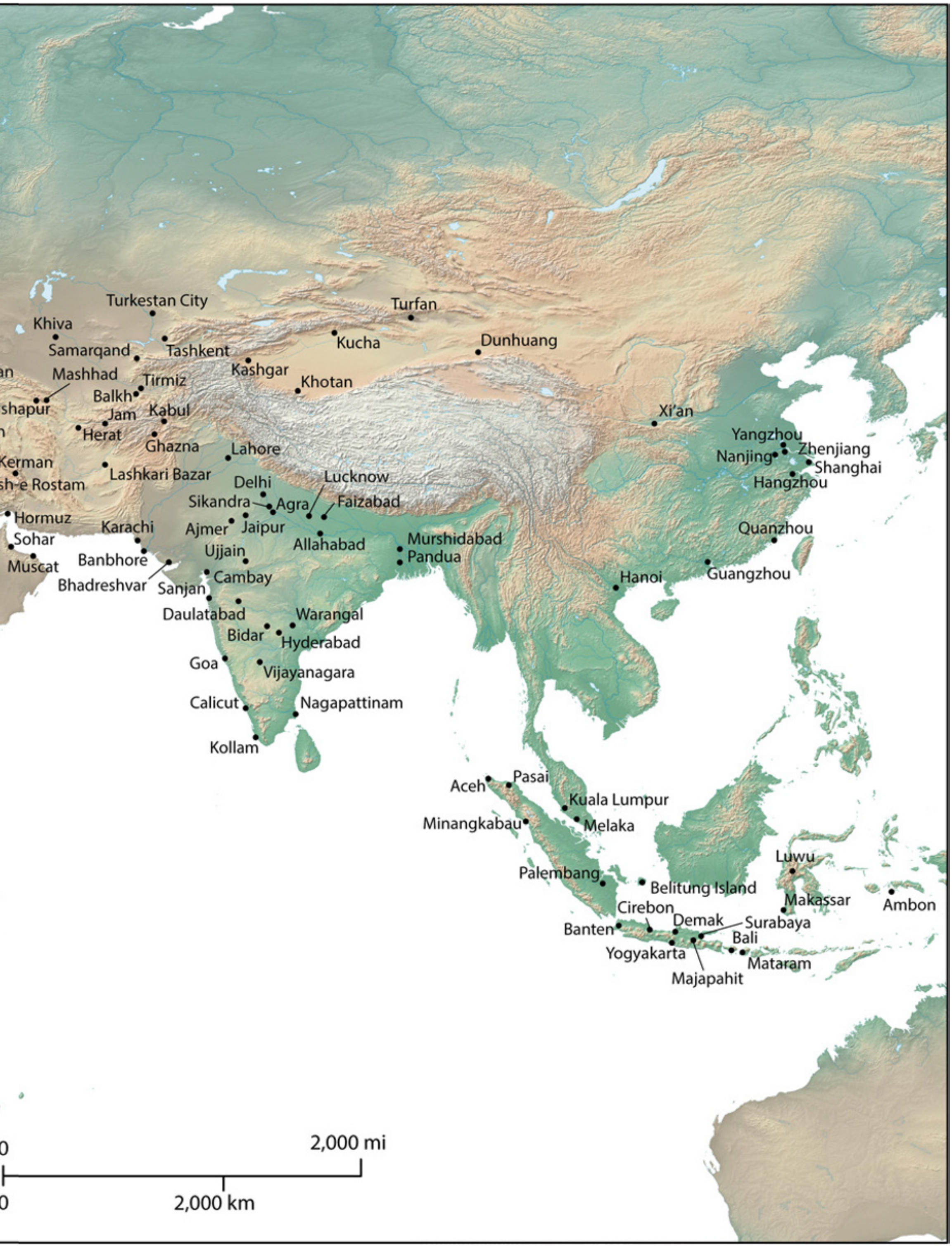
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Part V

“Global” Empires and the World-System (1250–1450)

The sack of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258, which eliminated the Abbasid caliphate established in 750, marks a generally accepted turning point in the history of medieval Islamic art and architecture. Although a puppet caliph descending from the Abbasid line was stationed in the Mamluk capital Cairo, so as to legitimize with official diplomas the sultanate of this Turkish-speaking dynasty of manumitted slaves and of other Turkic dynasties (including the early Ottoman and Delhi sultanates), Sunni Islam would never again be united under the spiritual aegis of an autonomous caliphate. The “pseudo caliphate” was abolished with the Ottoman conquest of Cairo in 1517, which brought to an end the nearly four-century-long Mamluk regime in Egypt and Syria: first the Bahri Mamluk dynasty (1250–1382) of mostly Cuman-Kipchak Turkic origin, followed by the Burji dynasty (1382–1517) of Circassian Mamluks. The post-Mongol era widened the cultural/artistic divide between the eastern and western Islamic lands. While the former readily absorbed new artistic inputs from Mongol China, having been subjected to Mongol rule all the way from Anatolia to China, the latter region not only withstood the Mongol invasions thanks to the powerful Mamluks but also made more sparing use of chinoiserie motifs in favor of developing its own innovative regional visual idioms. The cultural divide was further sharpened by a linguistic split: the Islamic west remained predominantly Arabic and Berber speaking, whereas in the eastern regions Turko-Mongol languages and Persian coexisted with or marginalized Arabic. The late medieval centuries between 1250 and 1450 saw the emergence of potent dynastic polities that would revive the patronage of monumental architecture, particularly the Mongol Ilkhanids (1256–1335) based in Iran and Iraq as the vassals of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in

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China (1271–1368), and their Mamluk rivals. In their imperial capitals, especially Tabriz and Sultaniyya, the Ilkhanids founded elite workshops with a multiethnic staff of painter-designers and calligraphers. These artists collaborated in the production of lavishly illuminated and illustrated manuscripts, as well as ornamental designs on paper intended to decorate portable objects in multiple media and differing scales, including architectural monuments. More developed versions of such royal workshops-cum-libraries would thereafter play a prominent role in the Persianate courts of the eastern Islamic lands, contributing to a greater aesthetic unification across media, an institution without parallel in Syria–Egypt, North Africa, and the Iberian peninsula. This section opens with Bernard O'Kane's chapter providing a broad overview of religious and palatial architecture in fourteenth-century court cultures, when most of the Islamic world was controlled by four dynasties whose capital cities became major centers of patronage: the Mongolian-speaking nomadic Ilkhanids (recent converts to Islam) based in Maragha, Tabriz, and Sultaniyya; the Turkic and Circassian Mamluks in Cairo; the Turkish- and Persian-speaking Tughluqs in Delhi (1320–1401); and the Berber-speaking Marinids in Fez (1217–1465). By the end of the fourteenth century, most of the realms formerly ruled by the Ilkhanids came under the rule of the Timurids (1370–1507), Turkish-speaking Turko-Mongol nomads.

The aforementioned dynasties were complemented by many smaller principalities like the early Ottomans, who from their bifurcated capitals in Anatolia (Bursa) and Thrace (Edirne) began to incorporate the Balkans and the Christian polities of Anatolia into the lands of Islam, thereby laying the ground for the conquest of Byzantine Constantinople in 1453 which united their formerly divided realms during the early modern era covered in the next section. In comparison to earlier times a much larger number of buildings and artifacts, including luxury manuscripts, survives from the late medieval period, complemented by more extensive written documentation and dated inscriptions with artists' signatures that begin to shed light on the production and consumption contexts of the visual arts, as well as aesthetic values. In addition, we possess textual sources in more diverse languages no longer predominantly Arabic (e.g., endowment deeds, archival documents, narrative historical-literary sources, and poetry). The diversity of the written and visual evidence means that much of it remains unexplored. Nevertheless, invasions, earthquakes, and the use of perishable materials contributed to the destruction of most monuments in capital cities of the Mongols and their successors, particularly Baghdad, Maragha, Tabriz, and Sultaniyya. Moreover, almost nothing remains from royal palaces (mostly in ruins, like the thirteenth-century Mongol Takht-i Sulayman palace in west Azerbaijan, Iran, or the fourteenth-century Timurid Aq-Saray palace in Uzbekistan), with a few exceptions like the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Alhambra Palace in Nasrid Granada and the Topkapı Palace founded in the fifteenth century in Ottoman Istanbul. Surrounded by fortified walls, both of the latter palatial complexes comprise multiple courtyards set in lush gardens with belvederes and waterworks. Elaborating upon previously established building types and multifunctional funerary complexes, the post-Mongol rulers of the eastern Islamic lands introduced innovative fusions of nomadic and sedentary elements, especially in tent-like garden pavilions and palaces, furnished with silk textiles, unprecedentedly refined carpets, and sheathed in vibrant polychrome underglaze-painted, mosaic- and *cuerda seca* tile revetments. Socioreligious complexes comprising the monumental domed mausoleums of their founders, which reflected a desire to control charitable foundations through family endowments, multiplied in the Ilkhanid, Timurid-Turkmen, and Mamluk domains. No such funerary complexes are to be found in the Islamic west, where rulers perpetuated earlier caliphal precedents in their preference to be buried in the garden pavilions of their palatial residences. Nor did the Maghribi and Spanish ruling elites establish suburban necropolises dotted with domed elite mausoleums, such as the extra-urban "cities of the dead" encountered in Mamluk Cairo and Timurid Samarqand (Shahi Zinda). It is also noteworthy that the dominant Maliki legal school in the Maghrib did not particularly encourage the rise of Sufi institutions (*zawiya*s and *khanqah*s), which were often combined with multifunctional funerary complexes.

Despite these regional differences, interregional architectural and artistic exchanges continued to be mediated by the circulation of objects, technologies, and individuals (architects, artisans, and patrons). The spread of ornamental drawings, architectural plans, and design scrolls in the post-Mongol period, thanks to the increased availability of affordable paper, facilitated the dissemination of design concepts across media and geopolitical boundaries. The Mongol and Timurid custom of forcefully deporting skilled artisans and intellectuals from conquered regions to settle them in their own multinational capitals provided yet another venue for the transmission of skilled craftsmanship and knowledge. So did the migration of architects, artisans, and elites fleeing from the Mongols to such frontier regions as Anatolia and India, where the Muslims were still a minority. Interest in cultural interactions with Mongol China has particularly flourished in recent years, partly owing to the multiculturalism of our own global age. As Nancy S. Steinhardt's chapter on Islamic architecture and ornament in China demonstrates, Mongolian rule under the Yuan dynasty constituted a veritable "golden age of Islam." Although Muslims had previously settled in and engaged in commerce in China, the creation of a multinational and multiconfessional Eurasian world-system under the "global empire" of the Mongols provided unprecedented opportunities for transcontinental interchanges. The so-called *Pax Mongolica* (Mongol Peace) promoted the circulation of individuals, artifacts, technologies, and knowledge on a global scale, thereby enabling exchanges between the eastern Islamic lands and Yuan East Asia. Consisting of axially aligned multifunctional complexes, Islamic religious monuments in China often translated imported forms such as the *muqarnas* and tall minarets into flexible timber-frame local prototypes, merged with polychrome Islamicate decorative motifs and inscriptions. Yuka Kadoi and Tomoko Masuya's article analyzes the adoption of

Chinese and Turko-Mongol elements in Ilkhanid and Timurid arts, ranging from ceramic vessels, tile revetments, and painted murals to manuscript painting, invigorated by naturalistic representational devices and landscape imagery. Combined with preexisting abstract medieval geometric-vegetal arabesques and calligraphy, the prevalent use of chinoiserie motifs (such as lotus blossoms, peonies, cloud bands, auspicious mythical animals, and angelic beings) contributed to the formation of a distinctive ornamental idiom dominated by semi-naturalistic floral and figural motifs. The remarkable flourishing of Persianate arts of the book in Iran, Iraq, and Central Asia during the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries constitutes the subject of David J. Roxburgh's chapter, focusing on luxury manuscripts and albums made for courtly patrons that grew in technical refinement. Priscilla Soucek, on the other hand, examines the diversification of illuminated Qurʾan manuscripts and calligraphic scripts from Spain all the way to China. Compared with relatively well-researched Ilkhanid Iran, the broader ramifications of Mongol culture in post-Seljuq Anatolia (incorporated into the Mongol territories after the Battle of Kösedağ in 1243) still remain to be explored. New studies are beginning to open a window onto the Western horizons of the *Pax Mongolica*, without which the emergence of Anatolian Turkmen principalities that were eventually subsumed under the Ottoman Empire can hardly be understood. Zeynep Yürekli's chapter on architectural patronage and the rise of the early Ottomans discusses the importation of Persianate artisans and tileworkers from Iran and the selective adoption of Timurid-Turkmen, Mamluk, Byzantine, and Italianate elements in the formative period of this dynastic architectural tradition. She suggests that the innovative constructions of viziers may have served as a trial ground for foreign craftsmen subsequently employed in royal building projects.

This section ends with chapters that interpret the synthesis of Islamic and non-Islamic building traditions in other frontier regions, the Iberian peninsula, and India. Cynthia Robinson discusses the "Western" contexts (both Maghribi and Castilian) of the Alhambra Palace in Granada, the dynastic seat of Nasrids (r. 1232–1492), who were the last significant Islamic rulers on Iberian soil. Their palace complex combined European-style figural paintings with the symbolic vocabulary of vegetal ornaments and light imagery, articulated by Qurʾanic and poetic inscriptions in Arabic. Elizabeth Lambourn's chapter turns to modest nonroyal mosques and Islamic landscapes in India, particularly along the Indian Ocean littoral, built in coastal sites for self-governing Muslim communities engaged in maritime trade, which was facilitated by the new "global" connections of the Mongol Empire. A further chapter on India by Phillip B. Wagoner and Laura Weinstein focuses on the arts and architectural monuments of the Deccani Sultanates, and their interregional connections with Delhi, Iran, Central Asia, Arabia, and the Gulf, which contributed to the Islamicization of the region's visual landscape. Starting with the fifteenth century, immigrants to the wealthy courts of the Deccan from Iran and Central Asia introduced a Persianate courtly culture rooted in Timurid and Turkmen arts, a pattern that continued thereafter and exercised an impact on the Indic court of Vijayanagara between the mid-fourteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries. Extending beyond the temporal boundaries of the present section, the authors analyze architectural monuments and manuscript paintings between the late thirteenth and late seventeenth centuries, marked by two conquests of the Deccan by north Indian powers: first by the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) and second by the Mughal Empire (1526–1858). This chapter thereby forms an effective transition to the next section, exploring the rise of the Mughals as one of the great early modern Islamic empires.

23

Architecture and Court Cultures of the Fourteenth Century

Bernard O'Kane

Recent scholarship has argued that the thirteenth century was a turning point in world history, when the creation of a Mongol empire stretching from China to Iran caused not only great devastation but was part of the formation of a world system extending the length of the Eurasian landmass (Abu-Lughod 1989). Other scholars have argued that Islam itself could be seen as a world system, one whose complex of social relations was greatly strengthened from the thirteenth century onwards by the spread of Sufi orders (Voll 1994). Until the emergence of the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century began to weaken it, several interlinked economic systems comprised this world system. It was dominated by the Middle East heartland with land routes stretching across Mongol Asia, with subsystems of the Mediterranean basin, the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and China.

Scholarship in Islamic art on this period is usually fragmented on geographic or dynastic lines, but a broader perspective on the period can be useful both in differentiating it from earlier centuries and in highlighting cultural connections to parallel economic ones. With the Mongols' extinction of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258, the former *de facto* political fragmentation of the Islamic world was cemented, with fewer dynasties even paying lip-service to the idea of unified caliphal authority. The arrival of the Mongols brought immediate Chinese artistic influences that only partially penetrated western Islamic lands. But with their conversion to Islam the spread of the religion reached central China in substantial numbers for the first time.

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For most of the fourteenth century much of the Muslim world was controlled by four dynasties, the Marinids in the west (1217–1465), the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria (1250–1517), the Ilkhanids in Iran (1256–1335), and the Tughluqs in India (1320–1401). By the end of the century the Timurids (1370–1507) had emerged as dominant in most of the area formerly ruled by the Ilkhanids. This chapter will focus on these dynasties, and in particular on the wealthiest and most active patrons, the Mamluks and Mongols, including their rivalry for prestige (O'Kane 1996).

The large amounts of territory ruled over by all these dynasties meant that substantial revenues from trade and agriculture were available for state patronage, frequently expressed in architecture. Beyond that, what connections existed between these geographically disparate areas? To a major extent, all were outsiders. The Marinids were from the Berber-speaking Zanata tribe, the Mamluks were Turkish-speaking, imported as slaves and manumitted; the Ilkhanids, in the period we are considering, recently converted Mongolian-speaking nomads; the Timurids Turkish-speaking nomads, and the Tughluqs, Turkish- (and Persian-) speaking former amirs, ruling over a territory the bulk of whose population was non-Muslim. All therefore needed legitimization, and conspicuous architectural construction, whether to display might through imposing buildings, to cement relations with the ulama (the religious classes) by the sponsorship of mosques and madrasas, or with more popular forms of piety through the erection of *zawiya*s, *khanaqah*s (respectively, less and more formal monastic institutions for Sufis), and pilgrimage complexes, was one of the surest ways to attain this.

Each of these dynasties inherited not just styles of building from their predecessors, but a physical landscape that to some extent limited their architectural choices. The primacy of available building materials dictated the choice of stone or brick, which in turn informed the decoration; usually tile with brick or carving on stone, supplemented by some stucco and carved or painted wood. There are many possible ways in which the architectural output of these dynasties can be studied. I will concentrate on two themes, the first secular, focusing on palatial and other domestic architecture, the second religious, focusing first on mosques and then on other religious ensembles.

Secular Architecture

The Mamluks

We have more information and extant monuments in this category from the Mamluks than any of the other dynasties, so we may start there. The Mamluks were manumitted Turkish slave troops who usurped power from their predecessors, the Kurdish Ayyubids, in the middle of the thirteenth century, and went on to control the core of the Middle East: Egypt, Syria, and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz. Having severed all family ties, they would be, at least in theory, fiercely loyal to their masters, but on the death of a sultan a nominal successor would be appointed while amirs jockeyed behind the scenes to see who could muster the most support. There was a fast turnover of Mamluk sultans, but the efficacy of the system is demonstrated by the Mamluks' lengthy tenure of over 250 years, during which time they were the principal power in the Middle East.

Their seat of power in Cairo was also that built by their Ayyubid predecessors, the citadel. Of the actual royal palaces on the Cairo citadel nothing remains, but we do at least have drawings and a plan of the single most impressive Mamluk building there, the Iwan al-Kabir (Great Iwan), a domed ceremonial hall rebuilt by al-Nasir Muhammad in 1333–1334. Its puzzling name for a domed hall arose because it replaced an earlier building on the same site that had an iwan as its main form. The hall was used for sessions of the *dar al-ʿadl* (court of justice) where the sultan held court on petitions from commoners to redress wrongs, and on separate occasions to distribute land grants to his amirs, and receive foreign ambassadors. It was monumental in scale, with, at just over 16 m diameter, the single largest dome in Cairo, supported on massive reused Pharaonic columns. Like the other large domes there, it was made of wood but decorated with green tiles, as was its neighbor, the mosque of the same patron, also refurbished in 1335. The plan of the Iwan al-Kabir is an unusual one for the period, being partly basilical. This has been seen as a deliberate attempt to invoke the early eighth-century throne halls of the Umayyad palaces of Syria, harking back to a golden age of the caliphate in an area also under Mamluk rule (Rabbat 1995: 256–263).

Another Mamluk throne hall was built by Jakam, the Mamluk governor of Aleppo in 1406; it shared with its predecessor in Cairo its monumentality and high visibility, also being built in a prominent place on the citadel, in this case on top of the Ayyubid entrance. In the wake of Timur's invasion of Syria and the Mamluk sultan Faraj's unwillingness to confront him, Jakam made his own bid for the office of sultan (to which the throne hall can be related), although his premature death in battle in 1407 obviated a direct contest. The plan of Jakam's hall in Aleppo was quite different from the Iwan al-Kabir in Cairo, being a nine-bay one. But its span of just over 8 m diameter proved too long for the beams he had ordered from Baalbak; only 10 years later under Sultan al-Muʾayyad was the work finished with beams from the Damascus area (Herzfeld 1955: 94–95).

Although the sultan's residence at the Cairo citadel, the Qasr al-Ablaq (Striped Palace), has disappeared, the fragments that remain of some of the amirs' palaces in Cairo give us crucial information on the scale, form, and decoration of the finest Mamluk domestic architecture. The Palace of Qawsun (1336) has a main entrance portal unmatched in Cairo save for that of the adjacent complex of Sultan Hasan. Its enormous ground floor vaulted storeroom and stables[1] supported an upper floor *qaʿa*, a reception hall consisting of two main axial iwans, each provided with deep recesses, and two small cross iwans, with a sunken courtyard, probably covered, between them. The colossal scale of this space is evident in the distance between the back of the recesses of the iwans on the main axis: just over 40 m. The courtyard itself was 12.5 × 11.1 m. Its wooden roofing, probably also supporting a lantern, must have been an impressive technical achievement – the span is much greater than that of the Aleppo hall which Jakam was unable to finish.[2]

Other surviving fourteenth-century *qaʿa*s in Cairo show that, even if the scale of Qawsun's palace was exceptional, they were only slightly less monumental. That of Bashtak in the center of the old city has well-preserved ceiling decoration in its main iwan (1337). Like the nearby mausoleum of Qalawun, it displays octagonal wooden coffers painted with similar motifs, and of similar high quality.

Another of al-Nasir Muhammad's amirs, Tankiz, built the Dar al-Dhahab (Golden Palace) in 1328, reputedly at the time the single most valuable property in Damascus, of which he was governor. It has not survived, but some of its stonework, including a unique glass mosaic inlaid fountain, was incorporated in the late Ottoman ʿAzm Palace that replaced it on the same site and shows that, whether for fine inlay or carved work, it was the equal of the better known religious buildings that have survived from the Mamluk period (Meinecke 1992: cat. no. 9C/222).

The fifteenth century shows a reduction in the scale of *qaʿa*s. All now have much smaller vestigial side iwans, and the main iwans, instead of stone arches, have wooden corbels (known as *kurdi*s in the sources) leading to a flat arch. That of Sultan Qaytbay in the Bayt al-Razzaz is the largest, but that of the merchant Muhibb al-Din (*c.* 1400–1450) preserves the most detail in its extensive decorative program.[3]

Three *maqʿad*s (reception halls) from this period have been preserved. The only open one, part of the palace of the amir Mamay (1496), has an elevated balcony fronted by an arcade of five arches that originally overlooked an interior courtyard. It too has a superbly decorated wooden ceiling. Two closed *maqʿad*s, in which the open arcade is substituted by windows, were attached to the complexes of the sultans Qaytbay (1474) and al-Ghawri (1504–1505). They point to an otherwise unusual gender segregation in Mamluk architecture, as they were reserved for family members of the founder.

The Marinids

The Marinids were a Berber dynasty of the Zanata group who ruled the western Maghrib (mostly equivalent to modern Morocco) from the mid- thirteenth until the mid- fourteenth centuries. They were the heirs of the Almohads (see Balbale, CHAPTER 14) but were initially not inspired by their religious fervor. However, after the foundation of their capital at Fas Jadid (New Fez) in 1276, they tried to harness the spirit of *jihad* (holy war) for the reconquest of Spain. They were unable to gain a permanent foothold there, although for a while in the mid-fourteenth century they controlled North Africa as far as Ifriqiyya (Tunisia).

The survival rate of Marinid palaces was poor. The principal monuments would have been in Fas al-Jadid, the administrative and royal foundation (by Abu Yusuf, begun 1276) that had its own walls, adjacent to the older town of Fez. The mosque has survived from this ensemble but not the palaces. However, what has survived is a very interesting account of the detailed involvement of the sultan Abu'l-Hasan in the planning of a house in Fez to accommodate his new Tunisian bride. Unable to find a suitable house, he specified that one be built with four domed rooms, each different and adjacent to two other rooms. The cedar wood used was to be carved and painted with floral and polygonal patterns; the ceilings of the abutting rooms were to differ from those of the dome chambers. The courtyard was to include columns and marble basins, and be paved with tile mosaic and marble. The doors, cupboards, and grilles were to be made of marquetry, enhanced with gilded copper or silvered iron.

Some possible fourteenth- and fifteenth-century houses have survived in Fez, which may be simplified versions of the house above. They have rooms around a central rectangular courtyard, with columns supporting a portico on the lower floor and a balcony on the upper. There are large rectangular rooms on the main axes, with smaller rooms or staircases in the corners. The elevation and decoration of the finest showed much in common with contemporary fourteenth-century madrasas in Fez (Marçais 1954: 313–314).

With regard to Abu'l-Hasan's house at Fez, it has been remarked how its plan could be compared to the fourteenth-century Court of the Lions in the celebrated Nasrid palace at the Alhambra of Granada (Marçais 1954: 311; see Robinson, CHAPTER 28). The comparison should not be regarded as too fanciful. The Marinid patrons were as wealthy as their Nasrid contemporaries and had similar tastes; the remaining fragments suggest that their vanished palaces may have been worthy competitors to the Alhambra. Some of the same elements can be seen in the remains of a palace at al-ʿUbbad near Tlemcen, down the hill from the mosque and mausoleum of Shaykh Abu Madyan (also by Abu'l-Hasan, 1337), and presumably built as a royal residence for the sultan's pilgrimage visits. Three courtyards of varying size were surrounded mainly by long rectangular rooms; the most spacious had a basin, and a portico fronting it. The quality of its remaining stucco decoration was also comparable to that in the Fez madrasas.

The Ilkhanids and Timurids

The founder of the Ilkhanids was the Mongol Hulagu, grandson of Chinggis Khan. His successors ruled over Iraq, Persia, and Transcaucasia, with the Seljuqs of Anatolia paying tribute to them. After the conversion of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304) to Islam, state patronage of monuments greatly increased. Uljaytu (r. 1304–1316), his successor and brother, moved the capital to his new foundation of Sultaniyya in northwest Iran, but it proved ephemeral (Blair 1986). After the death of the last ruler Abu Saʿid (r. 1316–1335) the empire disintegrated rapidly into small principalities. Timur (r. 1370–1405) (known as Tamerlane in the West), was Turkish-speaking but raised in a Turko-Mongol milieu. He came to power in Central Asia, from where he expanded to control Iran, leaving his sons in charge of various provinces. He was also undefeated in his campaigns as far apart as Delhi (1398), Damascus (1401), and Ankara (1402), bringing back vast amounts of booty that he used for monuments large enough to match his ego. His successors ruled from Herat, with their domain reduced to Khurasan, Afghanistan, and Transoxiana in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Both the Mongols and Timurids were nomads, heirs to a tradition in which tents were the setting for the most important aspects of royal life, from ceremonies of allegiance, to reception of ambassadors, to celebratory feasts. The *urdu* (imperial encampment) that accompanied the Ilkhanid ruler on his travels was essentially a tented city, with, for instance, separate camps for the ruler and each of his wives. Even though none of these tents have survived, textual sources and manuscript painting provide abundant evidence of their monumentality and sumptuousness. For example, a tent with a thousand gold pegs was made for the Ilkhanid sultan Arghun (r. 1284–1291) (O'Kane 1993: 250).

But the Irano-Islamic traditions that the Ilkhanids and Timurids encountered were oriented toward sedentary monarchs. Abaqa Khan was the Mongol patron of one of the first palace buildings at Takht-i Sulayman (Throne of Solomon, *c.* 1265–1275), although its remote location, in Azerbaijan, far from any urban center, perhaps made it more attractive to the patron's nomadic heritage. It seems to have had four irregularly spaced iwans around the central lake, partially built on the former Sasanian fire temple and palace at the site. Particularly important were the tiles recovered in and around two octagonal rooms attached to the western iwan: they displayed the first examples seen in Islamic art of Chinese phoenixes and dragons. Also important were luster tiles with verses of the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), relating the exploits of ancient Persian kings such as Kay Khusraw and Alexander the Great, heroes to whom the Ilkhanids wished to be compared. Nearby kilns show that, exceptionally, luster potters were moved from their native Kashan to make tiles on the spot (O'Kane 2011: 179).

Timur's major foray into this genre, his Aq Saray (White Palace, 1379–1396) at Shahr-i Sabz near Samarqand, was probably the largest of its kind, if we can judge by the staggering monumentality of its surviving entrance portal, still one of the most impressive walls of tilework ever built. It led into a courtyard just under 100 m wide, and judging by the Castilian ambassador Clavijo's comments, its interior was as impressive as its entrance (Golombek and Wilber 1988: 273–274).

The most common fusion of the nomadic and sedentary was in gardens. Ghazan Khan built a *chahar bagh* (partitioned garden) at Ujan near Tabriz with towers, pavilions, and a bath, at whose center were a golden circular trellis tent with a (much larger) tent of state provided with awnings. This was a precursor to the many Timurid examples, for which Timur himself set the standard, with some half dozen encircling the outskirts of Samarqand (Golombek 1995). Although some of these included pavilions, the most magnificent receptions areas, such as those seen by Clavijo in a feast hosted by Timur's wife Saray Malik Khanum, were in the tents erected within them (O'Kane 1993: 250). On occasion Timur could also transform a religious ensemble, such as the madrasa of Saray Malik Khanum in Samarqand, into the equivalent of a palace by pitching his tents in its courtyard. An added twist to his patronage is that some of his gardens seem to have been constructed in association with the marriage celebrations held there, and thereafter remained associated with those particular wives (Golombek 1995).

This method of maintaining a nomadic lifestyle in the vicinity of a city was retained by Timur's successors at their new capital Herat. The combination of pavilion and tent within a garden setting is best conveyed by the frontispiece to the Cairo National Library's copy of Saʿdi's *Bustan*, illustrated by the celebrated Herati painter Bihzad. It shows Sultan Husayn, the last major Timurid ruler (1470–1506), within a courtyard presiding over a feast with a circular trellis tent with an awning behind him as well as a garden pavilion (O'Kane 1993: fig. 12). However, the inseparability of a pavilion and a formal partitioned garden is confirmed by the *Irshad al-ziraʿa*, an early sixteenth-century agricultural manual written by one who was formerly in Timurid employ, who takes it for granted that a pavilion, not centered but near one end of the main axial prospect, should be present (Subtelny 1993).

The Tughluqs

The Tughluqs (1320–1414) came to power by defeating a previous usurper. Ghiyath al-Din and his son Muhammad (r. 1325–1351) were successful in defending their kingdom against Mongol Chaghatayid incursions, but Muhammad Shah's military acumen was not matched by leadership abilities. Excessive taxation and the movement of the capital to Dawlatabad (1323–1327) in the Deccan region of south India proved extremely unpopular. Timur's invasion in 1398 fatally weakened the sultanate, and various independent dynasties were established in the provinces.

The Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta, who served nearly nine years as a *qadi* (judge) in Delhi for the ruler Muhammad ibn Tughluq, provides an invaluably detailed account. The paucity of Tughluq palace architecture may be explained by his remark that when a sultan died his palace was abandoned and a new one built. This was taken to extremes by the three main Tughluqid rulers, who built three successive capitals around Delhi at Tughluqabad, Jahanpanah, and Firuzabad. Still, enough remains of the plan of the palace in the citadel at Tughluqabad of Muhammad ibn Tughluq's predecessor and the founder of the dynasty, Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq, to show that it was largely composed of two adjacent peristyle courtyards, the innermost with a four-iwan plan (Shokoohy and Shokoohy 1994: fig. 8).

The main audience hall of Sultan Muhammad at Jahanpanah, the Hizar Sutun (Hall of Thousand Columns) was composed of painted wooden columns and a carved wooden roof. Like the Tughluqabad palace, it was reached after passing through several gates. The name conjures up a hypostyle palace, but, although not mentioned by Ibn Battuta, it must also, like the Tughluqabad palace, have been fronted by a courtyard, since the ceremonies he mentioned involved the participation of over 100 horses and elephants, together with many more soldiers. Sultan Muhammad, and presumably the other Tughluqid rulers, had also not quite left behind the nomadic habits of their predecessors, for Ibn Battua also mentions a number of special occasions on which state tents were erected within the palace complex (Ibn Battuta 1958–1971: vol. 3, 667).

The frequency of wooden pavilions can also be adduced from the circumstances surrounding the death of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq. He had asked his son Muhammad to build a riverside wooden pavilion (*kushk*), but he was fatally crushed when it collapsed (according to Ibn Battuta by design) during an elephant parade.

Mosques and Other Religious Architecture

The Marinids

The foundation of Fas al-Jadid or New Fez (1276) was accompanied by the building of a congregational mosque there. Like many previous Maghribi mosques, it has a **T**-plan with a dome over the ante-mihrab bay, although its relatively small size (54 × 34 m) is reflected in the single bays that surround three sides of the rectangular courtyard. The much larger mosques in the adjacent older town obviated the need for a new building of any great size, and this applied to most of the towns that the Marinids occupied, with the exception of Mansura, their new foundation, built while they were besieging Tlemcen.

The Mansura mosque has a foundation inscription on its portal mentioning Sultan Abu Yaʿqub as the founder (1303); although it was worked on by Sultan Abu'l-Hasan when the Marinids retook Tlemcen (1336), it remained unfinished (Bouroubia 1973: 159–170). The plan has been uncovered by excavation and is exceptional in many ways. Unlike most earlier Magribi monuments it has a projecting entrance portal, surmounted in this case by the minaret. The courtyard is square rather than rectangular, and while it has a **T**-plan, the dome that in other mosques takes up the ante-mihrab bay is here replaced by a space 14 m square, covered by either a dome or, more likely, a pyramidal roof, that takes up nine bays in front of the mihrab. This element, as we shall see, is surprisingly close to the plan of the mosque built by the Mamluk sultan Baybars at Cairo (1267–1269). Three sides of the monumental 38 m high minaret survive, and give some idea of the fine tile and carved decoration that might have graced other parts of the building.

Closer to Tlemcen, in the suburb of al-ʿUbbad, is the mosque of Abu Madyan (1339), part of the shrine complex built by Sultan Abuʾl-Hasan. This shares with Mansura the emphasis on a *pishtaq* (elevated portal), embellished on the outside with some of the finest tile mosaic in the Maghrib, and an impressive carved wooden cornice. It leads to a vestibule decorated with stucco panels on the walls and a *muqarnas* vault whose delicacy and complexity is matched only by those of the Alhambra. Unusually, from the vestibule a staircase leads down to the ablutions area, and up to a Qurʾan school, another feature that suggests the influence of Mamluk Egypt. The mosque could be considered a simplified version of that of Fas al-Jadid, but it has some unusual features in its decoration, notably a grilled dome over the ante-mihrab bay that, instead of the more common ribs, has a naturalistic design of flowering shrubs, and in the arcades on the qibla side, barrel vaults decorated with plaster coffers that imitate the similar designs in wooden *artesonado* (coffered wooden) ceilings (Bouroubia 1973: 159–170).

The fame of Marinid architecture rests principally on the cluster of madrasas they erected, mostly at Fez, during 80 years of dynastic rule. After Abu ʿInan's madrasas at Meknes (1350) and Fez (1350–1355), however, no Marinid building of importance was constructed. But by this time the madrasas may have fulfilled their primary purpose, which was to educate a group of Berber-speaking jurists loyal to the Marinid rulers and who would be able to challenge the former, principally Arabic-speaking members of the ulama (Shatzmiller 2000: 87–93). At this time the most prestigious location in which teaching was held would still have been the Qayrawiyyin Mosque in Fez (tenth century and later), so these madrasas had much to prove. The founder of the dynasty, Abu Yusuf Yaʿqub, built the first, the Saffarin madrasa in Fez (1271). It lacks the intricate decoration of its successors but contains many of the same ingredients: small scale, no exterior façade, a basin within the courtyard, a prayer hall that is large relative to the other spaces, student cells,[4] and a minaret. It is the jewel-like courtyards of its successors such as the Sahrij (1321, Figure 23.1) and ʿAttarin (1346), however, that typify the genre. Columns and dadoes are clad in tile mosaic and sgraffiato epigraphic tiles. Densely packed stucco fills the walls above, broken only by the equally complex carving of the wooden lintels and, crowning one's vision, intricate carved wooden cornices. The courtyard is normally surrounded by a corridor that leads to the student cells, but privacy is maintained by a wooden screen that has the further effect of limiting the space of the courtyard. What redeems these spaces from visual surfeit is indeed their restricted space, since the viewer can never be so far away that the details are imperceptible.

The situation is different in the largest of the Marinid madrasas, the Bu ʿInaniyya (1350–1355). Ibn Battuta, asserting its superiority to madrasas elsewhere in the Islamic world claimed that "this madrasa has no rival in size, elevation, or the decorative plasterwork in it" (Ibn Battuta 1958–1971: vol. 2, 53; vol. 3, 584). He was of course mistaken in terms of its size and elevation, but it is precisely this combination of larger size and equally involved stucco that, despite the lack of a

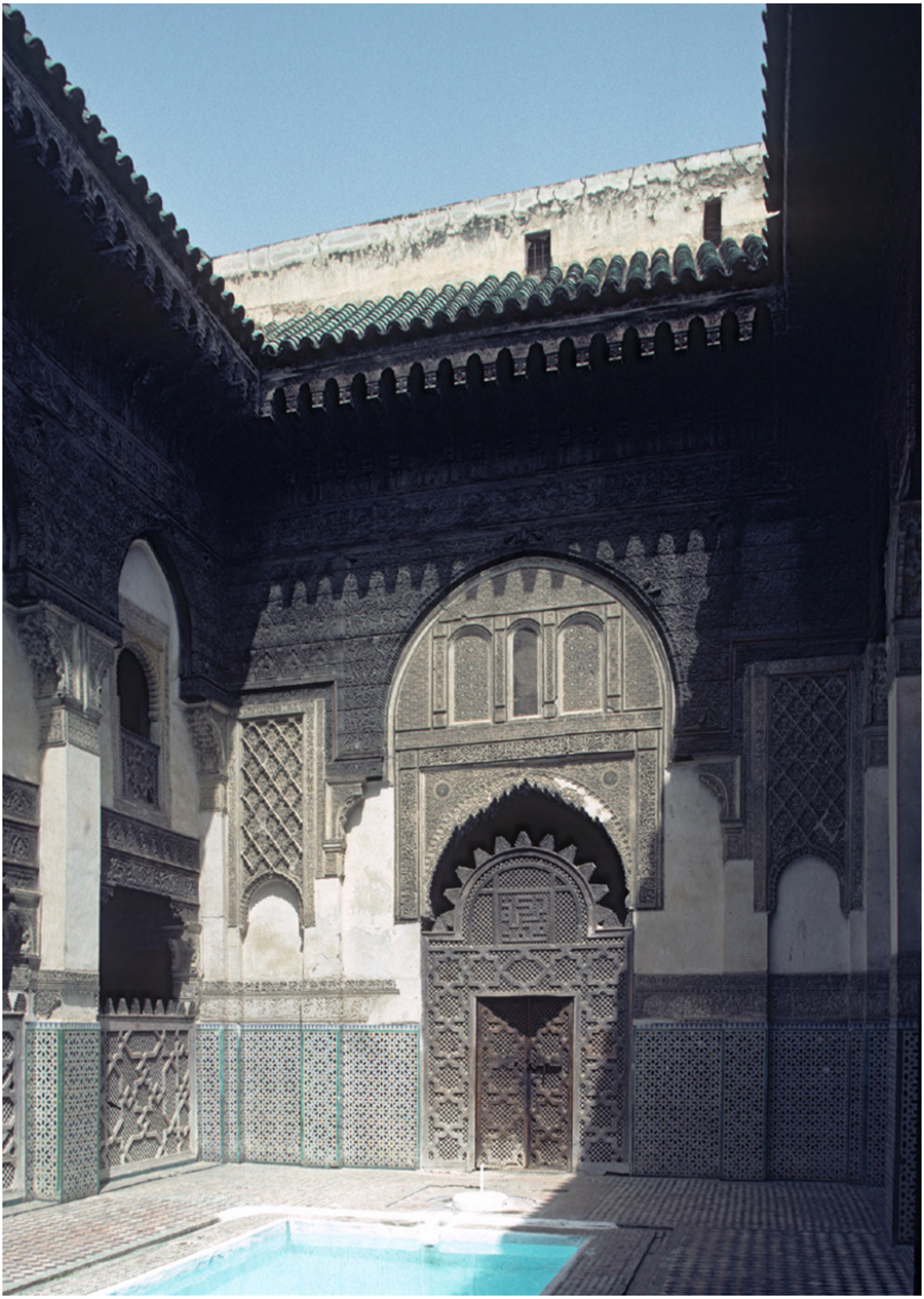

Figure 23.1 Courtyard, Sahrij madrasa, Fez. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.

tiled floor, still results in details that blur when seen from the other side of the courtyard. In terms of plan, however, the Bu ʿInaniyya was exceptional in its accommodation of a two-aisled prayer hall provided with a minbar, which presents a façade of five open arches to the courtyard. This is a reflection of its dual character, for its foundation inscription mentioned that it was also designed as a venue for the obligatory Friday prayer. The prayer hall would normally have been used for teaching in these madrasas, but here it is made more accessible by an adjacent rear entrance. Perhaps because of this there is another innovation: two square chambers with wooden domes on the cross axis of the courtyard, just where one would expect to find an iwan in madrasas further east in the Islamic world. There are also many links between madrasas and residences, and in addition to the small scale of the Moroccan examples, these dome chambers provide a parallel with a larger scale residence, the roughly contemporary Court of the Lions of the Alhambra Palace in Granada (see Robinson, CHAPTER 28). The exterior of this madrasa is also more interesting than usual. The entrance is marked by two arches that form a bay in front of the entrance; each of the four sides is decorated with stucco. And adjacent on the opposite side of the street was a unique water clock with bowls supported on finely carved wooden brackets. One final feature should be mentioned, its bronze-revetted main entrance door. This, also seen on some earlier Almoravid monuments (see Balbale, CHAPTER 14), is typical of many of Marinid madrasas, forming a corpus surpassed only by those of Mamluk Cairo.

The Mamluks

The major cities of Egypt and Syria had long had Friday mosques when the Mamluks came to power, so the scope for building new ones was limited. Cairo was the city where the sultans ruled from and on which they concentrated their patronage. Although the position of the Shafiʿi law school (one of the four great law schools of Sunni Islam) on the building of Friday mosques was that there should be only one in each urban entity, the Hanafi school had no such restriction. This has a bearing on the first major Mamluk mosque, that of Baybars (r. 1260–1277). The Hanafi Mamluk amirs had previously had disputes with the Shafiʿi judges; in response Baybars abolished their judicial monopoly and made the four schools of law virtually equal.

Baybars needed a large clear site, and picked al-Husayniyya, north of the old Fatimid walled city, in close proximity to the *zawiya* of Shaykh Khidr (his spiritual adviser) which Baybars had previously erected for him. In 1266 Khidr advised Baybars not to travel to Kerak; Baybars set out but fell from his horse and injured his thigh. Shortly after his recovery two months later, he ordered the construction of the mosque. Since Ibn Shaddad, a contemporary historian, mentions that the sultan named the mosque al-ʿAfiya (Good Health), there was possibly a connection between these events. Baybars also ordered that the mosque should have a portal like that of his madrasa and a dome like that of the tomb of the famous jurist Imam al- Shafiʿi (1211) erected over the mihrab. The wooden dome is no longer extant, but it was clearly built in competition with the almost equally large dome of the Ayyubid tomb of Imam al-Shafiʿi, as shown by Baybars's appointment of a *khatib* (preacher) belonging to the rival Hanafi law school to his mosque, completed in 1269. In addition, when Jaffa was captured from the Crusaders in the following year, Baybars supervised the demolition of its citadel, and specified that its wood should be used for the *maqsura* (royal enclosure) of his mosque and its marble for the mihrab (Behrens-Abouseif 2007: 121–126).

The mosque has a hypostyle plan, in which the dome in front of the mihrab takes up the space of nine bays and constitutes the *maqsura*. This harks back to the Seljuq sultan Malikshah's insertion of a dome into the hypostyle prayer hall of the Isfahan Friday mosque in the late eleventh century; several Anatolian mosques had used variations on this plan in the meantime. The mosque of Baybars had three projecting portals, but the resemblance to the portal of his earlier madrasa in Cairo lay in the placing of a minaret above the gate; recently it has been shown that all three portals probably had minarets (Behrens-Abouseif 2007: 124).

This remained the largest of Mamluk congregational mosques. Under al-Nasir Muhammad, however, when the Mamluk economy was at its greatest and the population of the city was expanding, the sultan and his chief amirs considerably increased the number of mosques. Al-Nasir Muhammad himself built two, one in the citadel (1318, rebuilt 1335) and another, the Jamiʿ al-Jadid (New Congregational Mosque, 1312), on the Nile shore north between Fustat and the Fatimid city. The latter has not survived, but from its detailed description by the historian Ibn Duqmaq it seems to have been very similar to the citadel mosque. Both, like Baybars's mosque, had a domed *maqsura* taking up the space of nine bays in the hypostyle plan, and the Jamiʿ al-Jadid may also have had three projecting entrance portals like Baybars's mosque. The Jamiʿ al-Jadid also had a *maqsura* on its northern side for Sufis. This was presumably just a grilled enclosure, but it presages the building of complexes which would blur the distinctions between *khanaqah*, madrasa, and mosque in Mamluk society. The most notable complex is that of Sultan Hasan (1356–1363), designated a congregational mosque (*jamiʿ*) in its *waqfiyya* (endowment deed), although the space was also used by students of its madrasa. And in the fifteenth century such was the flexibility of these terms that on occasion the endowment deed and foundation inscription are at odds with the appropriate term, it being called madrasa in one and mosque in the other. Given this interchangeability, discussion of religious complexes is now in order.

There are several interrelated aspects of Mamluk patronage of complexes that should be considered. The prime consideration was undoubtedly piety, which is related to the concept of *baraka* (grace or blessing). This in turn led to other considerations: principally the building of mausoleums, but also to their inclusion within complexes and their siting in relation to the street and the qibla area. Building a mausoleum was still to some extent a controversial matter, but religious objections would clearly be less likely if the tomb chamber was attached to a larger building that had a specific religious function such as a mosque, madrasa, or *khanaqah*. Secondly, closely related to the building of complexes was the *waqf ahli*, the family endowment, whereby family members controlled the disbursement of *waqf* income, and were permitted to keep any surplus to the needs of maintaining the religious institution. For an official whose tenure of power was precarious and whose wealth could be confiscated if he fell into disgrace, this had the added advantage of securing most of his wealth for his family, since *waqf*s, at least in theory, were inalienable.[5] Thirdly is the question of street–qibla alignment in the most prestigious location for monuments, the densely settled old city and neighboring quarters, which in turn is related to *baraka* and the siting of the mausoleum within complexes. Fourthly is the popularity of Sufism, which was reflected in the composition of complexes from the early fourteenth century onwards. We will explore how these concepts intersect in some of the most important examples erected in Cairo.

Sultan Qalawun's complex (1283–1284) consisted of the combination of madrasa, hospital, and mausoleum (Figure 23.2). While fighting against the Crusaders in Syria he had been injured and was subsequently treated at the hospital complex of Nur al-Din in Damascus (1154), also comprising the founder's madrasa and mausoleum. On his recovery he vowed to build a hospital in Cairo. The site was a central one of great prestige: that of the former western Fatimid palace in the center of the Fatimid city, on the west of Bayn al-Qasrayn (the square between the two palaces).

Qalawun's complex has the mausoleum and madrasa adjacent to the street, but no part of the hospital façade abutted it. The site of the hospital may have been in part decided by the availability of at least part of a courtyard from the old Fatimid palace, since the northern iwan of the hospital has a **T**-plan whose closest parallels are with Fatimid housing in Fustat. But siting the mausoleum on the street was always a priority, since passersby were thereby more likely to offer prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased. The *waqfiyya* ensured that the street outside reverberated with the chant of the Qurʾan, since teams of Qurʾan readers were employed to sit in the window niches for the benefit of those passing. The provision of a mihrab within the mausoleum, normal in earlier mausoleums in Egypt, would also have encouraged prayer for the occupant of the tomb, as would the six muezzins who gave the call to prayer from the adjacent minaret (despite it not being a building in which a *khutba* (sermon) for the Friday prayer could be given). The site of the minaret too was carefully chosen to ensure maximum visibility for those coming down the *qasaba*, the main artery of the old city of Cairo, from the north.

The building is also noticeable for its references to the plan and decoration of Umayyad predecessors. This is evident in the basilical plan of the qibla iwan of the madrasa, in the octagon made up of four piers and four columns supporting the mausoleum dome, all set within a square, a simplification of the plan of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and in its decoration with a variation of the *karma*, the vine scroll that was originally so significant in the interior of the

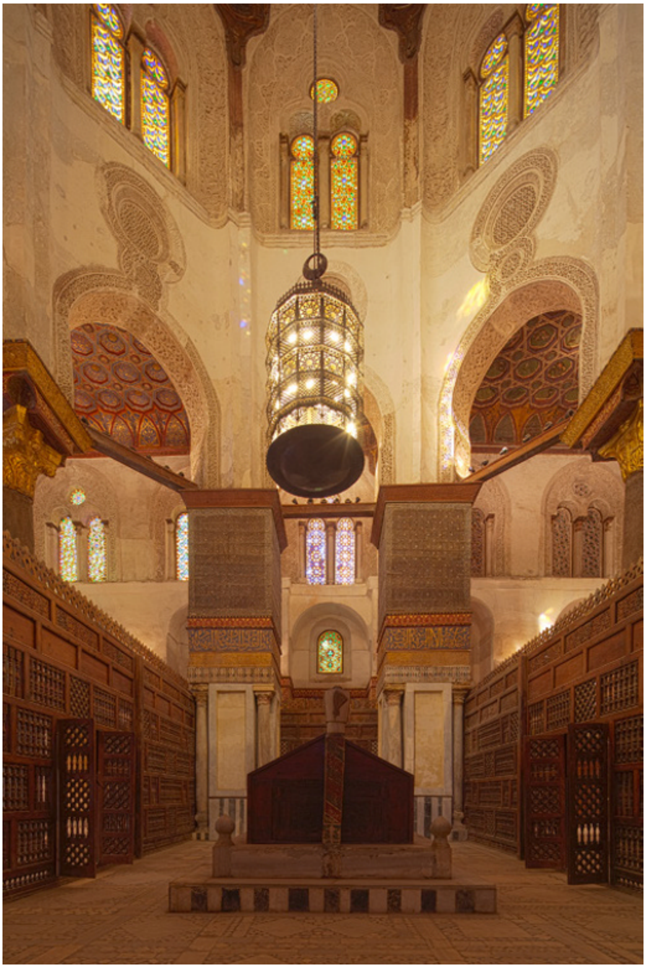

Figure 23.2 Interior of mausoleum, complex of Qalawun, Cairo. Source: Bernard O’Kane. Reproduced with permission.

prayer hall of the Great Mosque of Damascus (Flood 1997). Qalawun had spent a significant amount of time fighting the Crusaders in Syria and was presumably aware of the powerful messages of splendor and success that his models conveyed. This splendor was increased by the use of intricate polychrome inlay of stone and precious materials in the mihrab of the mausoleum, combining tiers of dwarf columns and variegated joggled voussoirs, a reworking of Ayyubid Syrian models that was to be copied in turn for decades in Cairene examples.

Although the street façade of the building was very narrow relative to its depth, its articulation was designed to bring maximum visual impact. For the first time it was provided with a regular series of deeply recessed niches framing triple-tiered windows, the highest consisting of novel double round-headed niches topped by a bull's-eye. Running the length of the façade between the first and second tiers is a large foundation inscription band that devotes the bulk of its content to the founder's titles; polychromy would have made its impact even greater.

Baybars al-Jashinkir's complex (1307–1310), consisting of a mausoleum and a *khanaqah*, was the first Mamluk one to make Sufis its prime focus. It is sited on a plot with a very limited street façade. The patron had the choice of placing his mausoleum far away from the street, beside the qibla iwan of the *khanaqah* to receive prayer from the Sufis, or far away from the qibla iwan, but on the street where passersby would be more likely to notice it (especially as it projected forcefully into the street); clearly street trumped qibla here. The two structures are also contrasted in terms of decoration, with the mausoleum receiving the finest marble inlay and painted ceilings (in its vestibule) of the time. Presumably it was thought that elaborate decoration would be a distraction for the austere Sufis, as even the mihrab of the *khanaqah*, the area usually reserved for splendor, is plain.

Although not a ruler of any great political or military distinction, Sultan Hasan has the honor of being responsible for the single most impressive Mamluk complex mentioned above (Kahil 2008; Figure 23.3). In one sense he was lucky to rule when the Black Death ravished Egypt, since so many complete families died that their inheritance passed to the state, swelling the amount available for building.

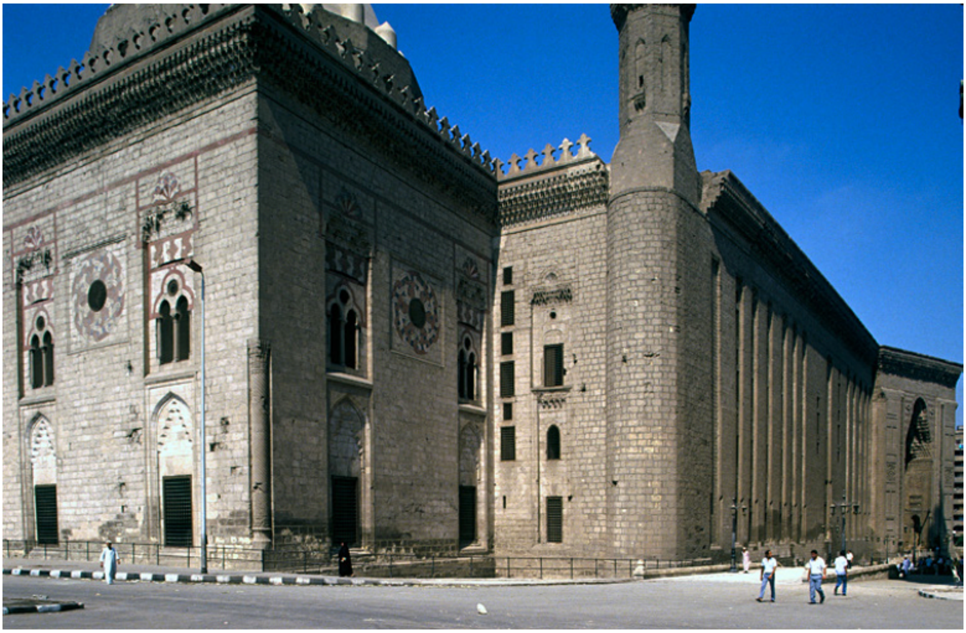

FIGURE 23.3 Exterior, complex of Sultan Hasan, Cairo. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.

Its location was carefully selected to display its huge bulk dominating one side of the square beneath the citadel. So solid were its foundations that on occasions rebelling Mamluks were able to drag cannons up to its roof and fire towards the citadel. The return fire barely caused pockmarks in the masonry, but subsequent sultans ordered the staircases of the building destroyed to prevent any further similar attacks.

The complex consists of the aforementioned four-iwan congregational mosque, with four madrasas, one for each Sunni school of law, in its corners, a domed mausoleum (but which was also designated a *masjid* or mosque in the *waqfiyya*) jutting out into the square, and a vestibule preceded by a massive portal that was subtly tilted to make it visible from the citadel. A doctor and 10 medical students were also mentioned in the endowment deed as occupying an upper floor behind the entrance vestibule, an area now ruined (and which may never have been completed) (Kahil 2008: 35–36).

The portal is the largest in Cairo. Its unfinished state (the patron was assassinated before the complex was completed) shows how the stone carving was at first lightly etched on the wall as guidelines for more skilled masons to finish later. It was originally provided with the largest of Cairo’s metalwork-revetted doors (later transferred by Sultan Muʾayyad to his own complex), surpassed in craftsmanship only by the door in the same complex leading from the qibla iwan to the funerary dome chamber behind it.

Behind the street portal is the largest vestibule in Cairo, a dome chamber that surpasses in height and decoration many of the finest mausoleums in the city. Its octagonal lantern compensates for the lack of windows, and spreads light evenly on its three *muqarnas*-filled recesses. The mostly dark passageway from here to the courtyard brings the viewer opposite the largest iwan in Cairo and makes it all the more impressive. Mamluk chronicles reported that the patron asked that it be made higher than the Taq-i Kisra, the still-extant fabled iwan of the pre-Islamic Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon in Iraq, and that this was duly accomplished. In fact, it is smaller, but the assumption of superiority kept everyone satisfied.

One of the most striking features of the qibla iwan functioning as a congregational mosque is the large stucco inscription band that encircles it; the style is so-called Eastern Kufic, more common in contemporary Qurʾanic manuscripts. The supervisor of works, the amir Muhammad ibn Bilik al-Muhsini, is known to have penned a Qurʾan as well as at least one of the inscriptions within the complex, and it is quite possible that he himself designed many of its motifs, which have much in common with the illumination of contemporary Qurʾanic manuscripts.

The ablutions fountain in the center has a bulbous wooden dome; this was probably also the shape and material of the mausoleum dome, later replaced in masonry. The projection of the tomb chamber on three sides of the adjacent square gave it unprecedented prominence, one that was further emphasized by the provision in the *waqfiyya* for 24 groups of five Qurʾan reciters to remind passersby to pray for the occupant of the tomb and to admire his beneficence.

The complex of Faraj ibn Barquq (1400–1411), by contrast, was built in an isolated area in the desert – indeed the name in contemporary chronicles for the location is just that, the *sahara*ʾ, desert, the area now known as the Northern Cemetery. The architect was thus unencumbered by the variations in street and qibla found within the old city. Its main components are a *khanaqah* and two mausoleums, together with ancillary rooms near the entrance, including two water dispensaries (*sabil*s) combined with a *maktab* (Qurʾan school) above, and small apartments for the founder's family. We also see here, as with the earlier *khanaqah* of Baybars, a dichotomy in the treatment of the mausoleums and the *khanaqah*: the asceticism of the Sufis apparently called for a lack of possibly distracting luxurious decoration, unstintingly applied to the mausoleums. Here, since this was a newly settled area, positioning the mausoleums beside a street for passersby was not an issue, so proximity to the main prayer area, the qibla prayer hall, was chosen instead. The mausoleums themselves have the largest stone domes in Cairo, with a diameter of 14.3 m and height of 30.4 m. Instead of the usual ribbing they display a more developed form of ornamentation with a zigzag pattern, above an undulating zone of transition.

By the time al-Ashraf Barsbay built his complex in the Northern Cemetery (1432) the urban context had changed; the area outside the main façade had become a well-traveled street leading towards the citadel. This meant that the siting of the mausoleum within the complex had to take into account this traffic of passersby. But the architect (or the patron) wanted the best of both worlds, that is, to also have it adjacent to the main prayer space. In the *waqfiyya* this prayer hall is designated as both a madrasa and as a *masjid* for the people of the neighborhood to gather and hear the *khutba* on Fridays. But a regular plan of four iwans would have given this a much greater depth than that of the mausoleum, so a two-iwan plan was employed instead. Although described as iwans in the *waqfiyya*, they are in fact each simply wide rectangles fronted by an arcade of three arches; in between them is a *durqaʿa*, a courtyard here modified into a strip, that also acts as a passageway to the mausoleum, emphasizing its continuity with the prayer hall.

Adjacent to this madrasa/mausoleum unit was the *khanaqah* itself, whose major element was 10 residential duplexes, as well as seven other cells for the Sufis, together with the usual service functions such as kitchen, stable, cisterns, and a large burial courtyard (*hawsh*).

The importance of the street was recognized not only in the placement of the mausoleum but now, for the first time, by splitting the complex into units separated from the main one. Across the street was a *zawiya* (no longer extant) for poor Muslims, and a dome chamber for the Rifaʿiyya Sufi order, indicative of the patron's desire to curry favor with both the official Sufis (at the *khanaqah*) and the more popular Rifaʿiyyas.

At the complex of Qaytbay (1472–1474), also in the Northern Cemetery, the earlier focus of Mamluk architecture on monumentality has given way to smaller scale buildings with a concentration on decoration. The living unit (*rabʿ*) for the students is not completely separate from the main building, which consists of a *sabil-maktab*, a madrasa, and a mausoleum with an adjoining funerary courtyard. The profile of the building on the exterior has the dome perfectly balanced with the minaret over the portal. The dome itself is the cynosure of carved stone domes in Cairo, with a unique combination of geometric and arabesque ornamentation carved on many levels.

The Ilkhanids and Timurids

Pre-Ilkhanid Iran was notable for the variety of its mosque plans, and this wide range continued in the Ilkhanid period. As in other areas, the larger cities were already provided with major mosques, so not many Ilkhanid congregational mosques were built; however, one stands out for its monumentality: that of the vizier ʿAlishah in Tabriz (*c.* 1318–1322). It was actually part of a complex consisting of a mosque, a mausoleum, a surrounding bazaar, a madrasa, a *khanaqah*, and two baths, but given the fame of the only surviving element, which was part of the mosque, we will discuss it here. The walls were part of the qibla iwan, but their scale may be judged from the name by which it was later known, the *arg* (citadel). Indeed the qibla iwan was later used as a citadel, as the pockmarks caused by cannonballs on its façade show. Its size resulted from a deliberate order on ʿAlishah's part to make it 10 cubits wider and higher than the Sasanian Taq-i Kisra, with which Sultan Hasan's later funerary mosque complex in Cairo is also said to have competed, as we have seen above. But the attempt backfired when the iwan in Tabriz fell not long after its construction. The Ilkhanid historian Mustawfi attributed its collapse to its having been built in too much haste, but a seventeenth-century drawing appears to show part of a semi dome on the qibla end; perhaps an experiment with transverse vaulting leading to this semi-dome led to its instability. Adding to the importance of the complex of ʿAlishah is the influence that it and its architect had on the development of Mamluk architecture. For the Mamluk ambassador Aitamish, who visited Tabriz shortly after its completion, was so impressed by the minarets of the building that he brought their builder back to Egypt, where he inaugurated a short-lived fashion for tile decoration (Meinecke 1976).

We are not sure of the rest of the mosque's layout, but it is likely that it had a four-iwan plan. Its most surprising feature was a large pool in the middle of the courtyard, 150 cubits (63 m) square, which contained an octagonal pavilion in the center with four lions at the corners from whose mouths water poured into the pool. Four boats provided access to it; the tradition of boating in it was maintained in the time of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (d. 1576), when it may have become part of his palace at Tabriz (Grey 1873: 168).

The Friday mosque of Yazd was begun under the Ilkhanids in 1324 but proceeded slowly; its main iwan was only finished in 1334, and the revetment of the qibla dome chamber in 1375. But it displays three important innovations. The first is the opening of the back of the iwan to almost it full height so that from the courtyard a full view of the interior of the qibla dome chamber is possible. The second is the incorporation of upper story galleries both in the dome chamber and the iwan leading to it. The purpose of these is still not clear, although it is unlikely that they were meant for women. The third is a trend occurring in other monuments: namely the vastly increased use of tilework on the interior of the dome chamber. This varies from the brick and tile used for geometric patterns on the dome and for sacred names on the zone of transition to the complete tile mosaic on the mihrab spandrels, incorporating a unique epigraphic medallion with the names of ʿAli and Muhammad intertwined. Finally, one should note the cross-axial entrance iwan surmounted by two minarets, with a height and slenderness unmatched by any earlier combination of these elements.

The monumentality that characterizes these Ilkhanid monuments was also characteristic of the monuments built by the Central Asian ruler Timur (r. 1370–1405). It was uppermost in Timur's mind when he ordered the building of his Friday mosque in Samarqand (1398–1405) (Figure 23.4), later known as the

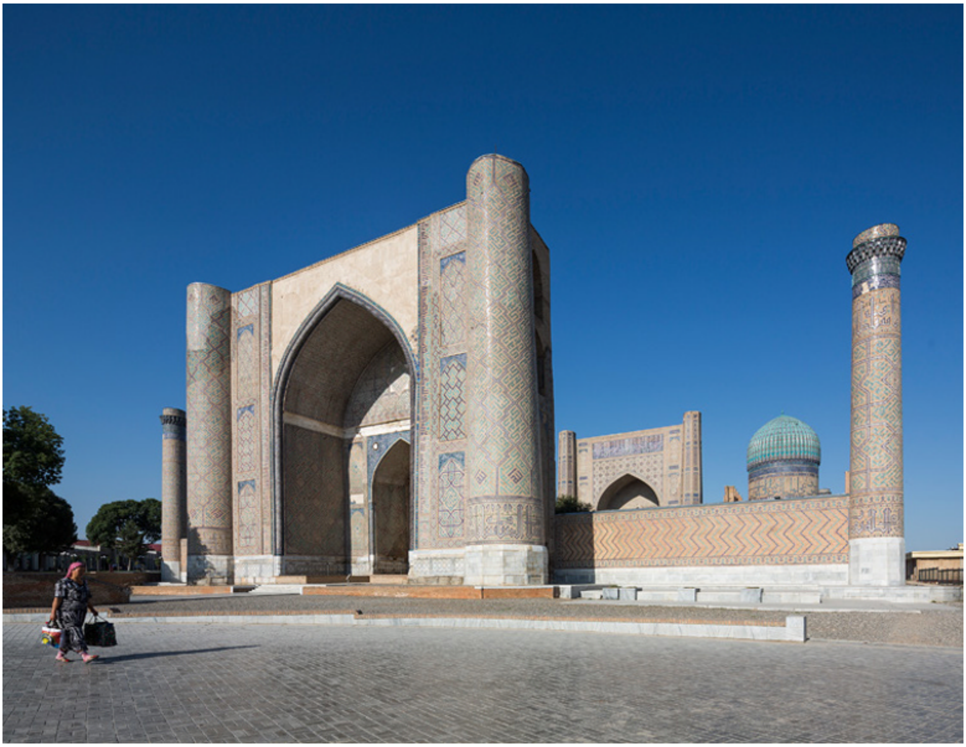

Figure 23.4 Exterior of the Mosque of Bibi Khanum, Samarqand. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.

Mosque of Bibi Khanum, Timur's principal wife, on account of the earlier building of her funerary madrasa opposite. Started before Timur's Indian campaign, he was so dissatisfied with its scale on his return that he ordered the two supervisors executed and its height to be increased. Apart from its size it was also innovative in several ways. It had an exterior that was decorated on every side. Normally, in a large city it would be hard to obtain the free space necessary to achieve an unobstructed view of the building from the exterior, but Timur's earlier arrogant treatment of those who had objected to their houses being destroyed to make way for a bazaar shows his total disregard for the norms of Islamic property law in this matter (O'Kane 1987: 89).

The mosque's portal and qibla iwan incorporate minarets whose buttresses descend all the way to the ground. This reflects the design of the now vanished Friday mosque of Sultaniyya in Iran, the aforementioned capital built by the Ilkhanid ruler Uljaytu (r. 1304–1316). The interior has the usual four-iwan plan, but for the first time in Iran dome chambers are found behind the two side iwans, a feature that was copied in the Safavid shah Abbas I's seventeenth-century new Friday mosque at Isfahan. This arrangement is found in the Jahanpanah mosque of Delhi (1343), which Timur had seen in 1398, and which may have inspired its counterpart in Samarqand. Timur's mosque was also unusual for the amount of carved stone used in it; this may be partly due to craftsmen taken back from his Indian campaign; at any rate elephants were used to transport the stone, as shown in a later painting by Bihzad depicting its construction process.

The only other two major Timurid mosques were built by Gawhar Shad, the wife of Timur's son Shahrukh, at Mashhad and Herat. That at Mashhad (1418) borrowed the Yazd Friday mosque's feature of the open qibla iwan. It also adapted the two-story galleries of Yazd by placing them around the courtyard, although since the prayer halls below are of just one story, they are merely façade architecture (O'Kane 1987: cat. no. 2).

As with the Mamluks, family *waqf*s were permissible in the Hanafi school of law followed by Iranian sovereigns in this period, so it is not surprising that the most impressive Ilkhanid and Timurid ensembles were erected by royal patrons, and that, like those of the Mamluks, they were also of a funerary nature.

Most of the greatest Ilkhanid ensembles have either not survived, or just a small fragment of them is extant. Chief among them must have been the surburb of Ghazan Khan (Shanb) built near Tabriz (1295–1304). It was groundbreaking in the variety of functions collected in one place. In addition to a palace and garden for the founder, the monuments mentioned in the *waqfiyya* included his monumental tomb, a congregational mosque, a Hanafi and Shafi'i madrasa, a *khanaqah*, a *dar al-siyada* (a hospice for visiting sayyids, i.e., descendants of the Prophet), an observatory, a hospital, a library, a *bayt al-qanun* (House of Laws, serving as a repository for Ghazan Khan's promulgations), an academy of philosophy, a house for the overseer, a cistern, and a bath. The tomb was 12-sided, with a sign of the zodiac decorating each side. It was the largest in the Islamic world at that time, with a height of 54.6 m and a diameter of 21 m (O'Kane 1996: 507).

Ghazan's brother Uljaytu made his tomb the centerpiece not just of a complex but an entirely new city, Sultaniyya. Earlier, he had sponsored many additions to the shrine of a ninth-century saint, Bayazid Bistami, including a mausoleum for one of Uljatyu's sons (Wilber 1955: cat. no. 28). Not all historians give the same list of components of Uljaytu's complex, but it seems to have included a mosque, madrasa, and *khanaqah*, as well as a *dar al-siyada*. The remaining octagonal tomb (1310–1320) is what gives the building its fame; at a height of 50 m and diameter of 25 m it clearly rivaled Ghazan's in monumentality (Figure 23.5). Original features included the eight partially preserved minarets that encircle the dome, and below them, a stucco enriched gallery, much bigger that its possible model at the tomb of Sultan Sanjar (d. 1157, the last major Seljuq ruler) in Merv, eastern Iran, and a key landmark en route to later mausoleums such as the Taj Mahal in Agra. Its interior decoration was remodeled from tile to painted plaster after its dedication in 1313. The most plausible explanation for this momentous change is that the selection of Qurʾanic inscriptions was designed to reflect Uljaytu's ambitions, supported by a contemporary military campaign, to be the protector of the holy shrines at Mecca and Medina (Blair 1987).

Another vanished complex was the Rashidiyya, a suburb of Tabriz, built by Uljaytu's vizier Rashid al-Din (*c.* 1300–1318). The survival of its *waqfiyya* permits an accurate reconstruction. It included a hospice, a *khanaqah*, a hospital, and a tomb complex arranged around a four-iwan courtyard with summer and winter mosques and a room in which Rashid al-Din's works were to be copied for distribution within Ilkhanid territory (Blair 1984).

Many Timurid complexes also incorporated a mausoleum. Timur again showed his penchant for the grandiose in the shrine he built at the tomb of Shaykh Ahmad Yasavi at Yasa (now Turkistan city in Kazakhstan, 1397–1399). He replaced its original twelfth-century mausoleum with an impressive double-shell domed structure, and adjoined it with an even bigger dome for the centerpiece of the shrine, a meeting hall (*jamaʿat khana*) for Sufis. The massive entrance iwan was never finished, but all the other sides of the buildings were completely faced with *bannaʾi* tilework.

Timur was himself ultimately buried in the Gur-i Mir in Samarqand (1404), the tomb that he himself had erected for his grandson Muhammad Sultan, beside the latter's madrasa and *khanaqah*. As with his Friday mosque in Samarqand, it was reputed that he expressed dissatisfaction with its size and ordered it to be built higher. It is unlikely that the whole building was pulled down and re-erected in 10 days, as Clavijo reported, but it is possible that the drum was made higher to compensate, explaining its rather ungainly proportions.

A novel funerary structure is the shrine of ʿAbdallah Ansari at Gazur Gah, just outside of Herat, built by Timur's son Shahrukh (1428) (O'Kane 1987: cat. no. 9). Where a grave already existed, the Timurids were inclined to leave it uncovered in

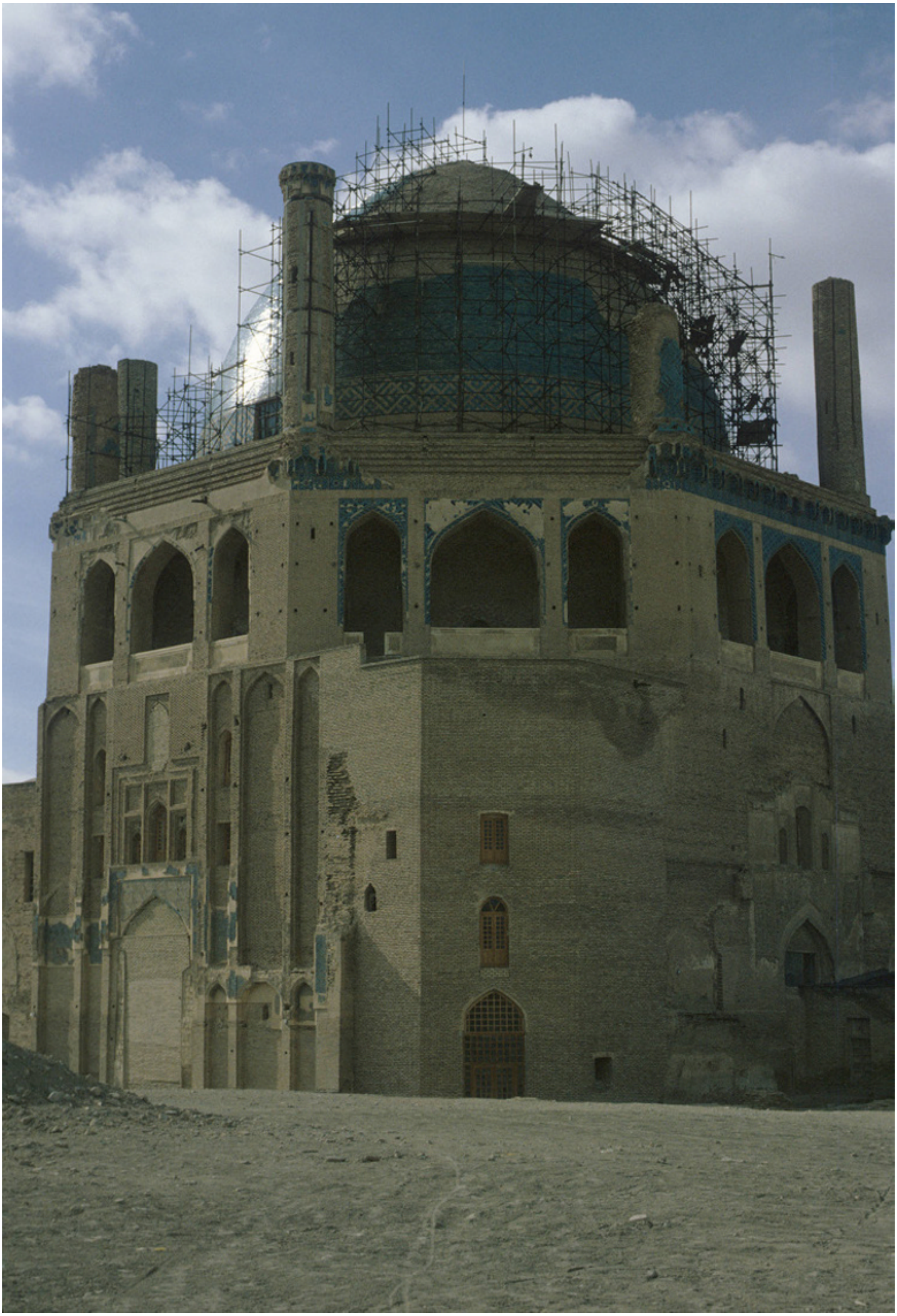

Figure 23.5 Exterior of mausoleum of Uljaytu, Sultaniyya, Iran. Source: Marcus Milwright. Reproduced with permission.

a building commemorating its occupant. The shrine at first appears similar to contemporary madrasas, with an entrance complex leading to a courtyard surrounded by cells, but the eastern side of the courtyard, in which the grave is located, has a curtain wall instead, intended to solemnify the surroundings of ʿAbdallah Ansari's resting place.

This building, like Gauhar Shad's complexes at Mashhad and Herat, was built by Qavam al-Din Shirazi, the sole Timurid court architect to be mentioned in contemporary histories. The complex at Herat consisted of the mosque, mentioned above, and a funerary madrasa, now the only surviving element (apart from a minaret) (O'Kane 1987: cat. no. 14). It is notable for its innovative vaulting, consisting of intersecting vaults producing a smaller square that is in turn roofed by a shallow dome on *muqarnas* squinches. An even more impressive example of this scheme was used by Qavam al-Din in the madrasa at Khargird (1444) (founded by the vizier Pir Ahmad Khafi), where it is topped by a lantern (Figure 23.6). The accompanying axial recesses in these rooms lend further ambiguities to their spatial quality, the whole leading to a blending of the older tripartite division of cube, zone of transition, and dome (O'Kane 1987: cat. no. 22).

The Tughluqs

Early mosques of the Tughluqs did not lack for scale: that (now ruined) of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq at his eponymous city was 110m each side; the Begampur Mosque (1343) of his successor Sultan Muhammad at Jahanpanah is 90 × 94m. The Begampur Mosque is largely intact. Its plan has been often described as the first four-iwan one in India, but this is inaccurate. There are indeed iwans on the main axis, in conjunction with a dome chamber, but on the side axis the dome chambers stand alone, not preceded by any *pishtaq*. However, this arrangement is still innovative, recalling, surprisingly, that of the Marinid Bu ʿInaniyya madrasa in Fez, discussed above. A characteristically Indian feature is the stone eaves that project from the courtyard arcades. Another innovation is the nine-bay *maqsura* adjoining the northwest corner, provided with its own mihrab, presumably for the royal entourage; an analogous feature appears in the Qutb Mosque, the first Friday mosque of Delhi (1192), and may have its origins in the Ghaznavid and Ghurid mosques of Afghanistan. Like other Tughluq buildings, the mosque features sloping walls, and stucco covered rubble masonry. However, the meager decoration within the qibla dome chamber is a disappointing contrast to the scale of the building, although around the interior of the courtyard the remains of carved stucco ornament are still visible, while the spandrels of the arches on the exterior façade were filled with blue-glazed lotus flowers, one of the earliest occurrences of such tilework in the architecture of the Delhi Sultanate (Welch and Crane 1983).

The Jamiʿ of Firuzshah (*c.* 1354) at Firuzabad is raised on a plinth, the lower stories presumably being used for rent-producing shops. Like the Begampur

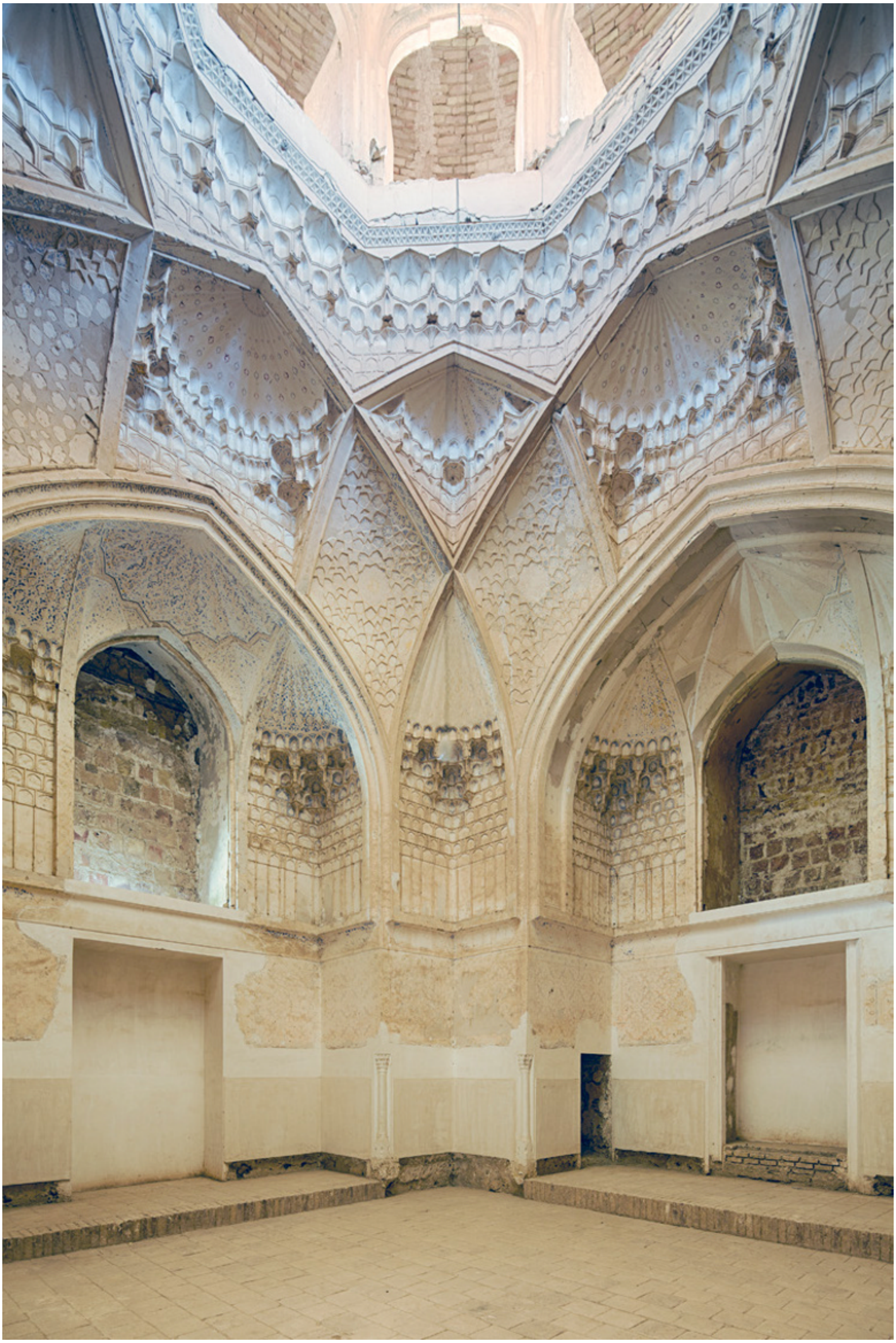

FIGURE 23.6 Interior of lecture hall, madrasa, Khargird. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.

mosque it had a staircase leading to a domed entrance pavilion, but the interior is too ruined to be sure of its layout. However, its importance to the founder is shown by the reports that his *Futuhat*, an apologia for his reign, was carved on a dome chamber supported on eight pillars at the center of the courtyard. This is a sharp contrast to the usual, but surprising, lack of epigraphy on Tughluq architecture. But its text exemplified another interesting trend in Sultanate India, the adoption of Persian for important inscriptions, especially foundation texts, before this became normal in other parts of the Persian-speaking world (O'Kane 2009). Adjacent to the mosque is its minaret, the so-called Lat Pyramid, almost a step well in reverse in that the lower part of its core is solid. However, contemporary sources refer to it as the *minar* of the mosque, and to the reused third-century BCE Ashokan pillar that crowns it as the *minar-i zarrin*, the gilded minaret. Firuzshah clearly had in mind as its prototype the fifth-century Iron Pillar reused in the Qutb Mosque of Delhi, and the contemporary history the *Sirat-i Firuzshahi* celebrates this reuse of a Hindu monument in an Islamic setting, made all the more meritorious through the difficulties of transporting it from its place of origin nearly 200 km away (Flood 2003).

The Khirki Mosque at Jahanpanah is now thought to date from the early part of Firuzshah's reign, probably before Firuzabad was begun. It is also raised on a plinth, and shares the same squat square stone pillars for the hypostyle area as the Begampur Mosque. The plan is totally different, however, taking symmetry to the ultimate level. The core is the nine-bay plan, itself one of absolute symmetry. This is set within a five by five grid, producing 25 units, of which four are opened for courtyards. The three axial projecting domed entrances are also mirrored by the projecting mihrab dome. It looks great on paper, but in practice the gloom that envelops the main axis from the entrance to the mihrab betrays the poverty of invention, one again exacerbated by the lack of decoration.

Of much greater aesthetic appeal is the Adina Mosque (1374) at Pandua in Bengal, built by Sultan Sikandar Shah of the rival Ilyas dynasty. It is even bigger than any of the Tughluq examples, being 154 × 87 m. The plan is hypostyle, with a monumental iwan inserted on the qibla side. Like the Begampur Mosque, it has a nine-bay annex, although in this case it leads into the *zenana*, a mezzanine floor for the founder's family inserted into part of the qibla prayer hall. The great appeal of the building lies in the quality of its decoration: the carved stucco, brick, and stone show remarkable variety and invention. The tympana of the 34 bays along the qibla wall show an outstanding variety of carved brick ornamentation. The mihrab in the qibla iwan combines the lushness of Hindu-derived ornamentation with panels of impeccable classical *thuluth* calligraphy, the latter enriched by a floriated scroll in light relief. Almost more impressive are the three polylobed stone mihrabs in the *zenana*, with the same combination of Hindu-derived plus geometric ornamentation and classical Islamic calligraphy, and in addition, on their tympana, astonishing variations on chinoiserie lotus and peony floral elements, the like of which is seen nowhere else in pre-Mughal India.

As in Ilkhanid Iran, the single most impressive extant monument from the Tughluq period is a mausoleum: that of Shaykh Rukn-i ʿAlam at Multan (*c.* 1335–1340), now in Pakistan (Figure 23.7) (Hillenbrand 1992). Astonishingly for such a magnificent building, we have no information from epigraphy or the sources on who built it or when it was built. The oft-quoted story that Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq built it while he was governor of Dipalpur (240 km northeast of Multan) for himself is not borne out by any contemporary text. When the shaykh died in 1335 he was at first buried in the tomb of his grandfather, and only later transferred to the present mausoleum. The most likely possibilities are that it was completed shortly after his death, and commissioned either by the reigning Sultan Muhammad, or by the members of the wealthy Suhrawardi Sufi order to which the shaykh belonged.

The 30 m high dome is made more imposing by its elevated location in the citadel. The octagonal exterior is emphasized by eight massive buttresses, each capped by a domed finial, in turn echoed in smaller versions on the cornice of the upper gallery. This gallery can be seen as a variation on the earlier external galleries of equally monumental tombs such as those of Sultan Sanjar at Merv and Uljaytu at Sultaniyya, culminating in the seventeenth century at the Taj Mahal. The exterior as a whole is enlivened by bands of terracotta, set off against inventive combinations of brick and tile, the latter encompassing mostly monochrome glazed white, turquoise, and dark blue, but which are also occasionally merged in the relatively new technique of underglaze-painted tiles.

The interior is distinguished by its wooden mihrab, prominently displaying the seal of Solomon on the spandrels, a favorite decorative motif in later Mughal architecture. Its mastery of shallow-relief vegetal ornament is a surprising contrast to the awkwardness of the calligraphy of its framing inscription. The use of tilework is more restrained on the interior, being chiefly concentrated on the shallow squinches, which also display a unique wooden artichoke-like pendent.

Ghiyath al-Din's tomb at Tughluqabad near Delhi (1325) is much smaller but impresses on account of its materials, one of the first sultanate buildings, after the ʿAlaʾi Darwaza, the monumental gateway added to the Qutb Mosque of Delhi by Sultan ʿAla al-Din Khilji (r. 1290–1316) to use the combination of red sandstone and marble that was to become a favorite of the Mughals. But even with this use of expensive ashlar masonry, so different from the usual plaster-covered rubble walls of other Tughluq buildings, restraint is the order of the day. The polylobing of the outer arched niches is the only exception; even the interior marble mihrab has just this polylobing and carved engaged columns, the rest is plain. The original setting of the tomb was within an artificial lake, recalling the later tomb of Sher Shah Sur at Sasaram. However, the high walls that surround the mausoleum would have made the distant lakeshore view less effective.

The combination of madrasa (1352) and mausoleum (1388?) is also found at the madrasa founded by Firuzshah at the Hauz Khas in Delhi, although their

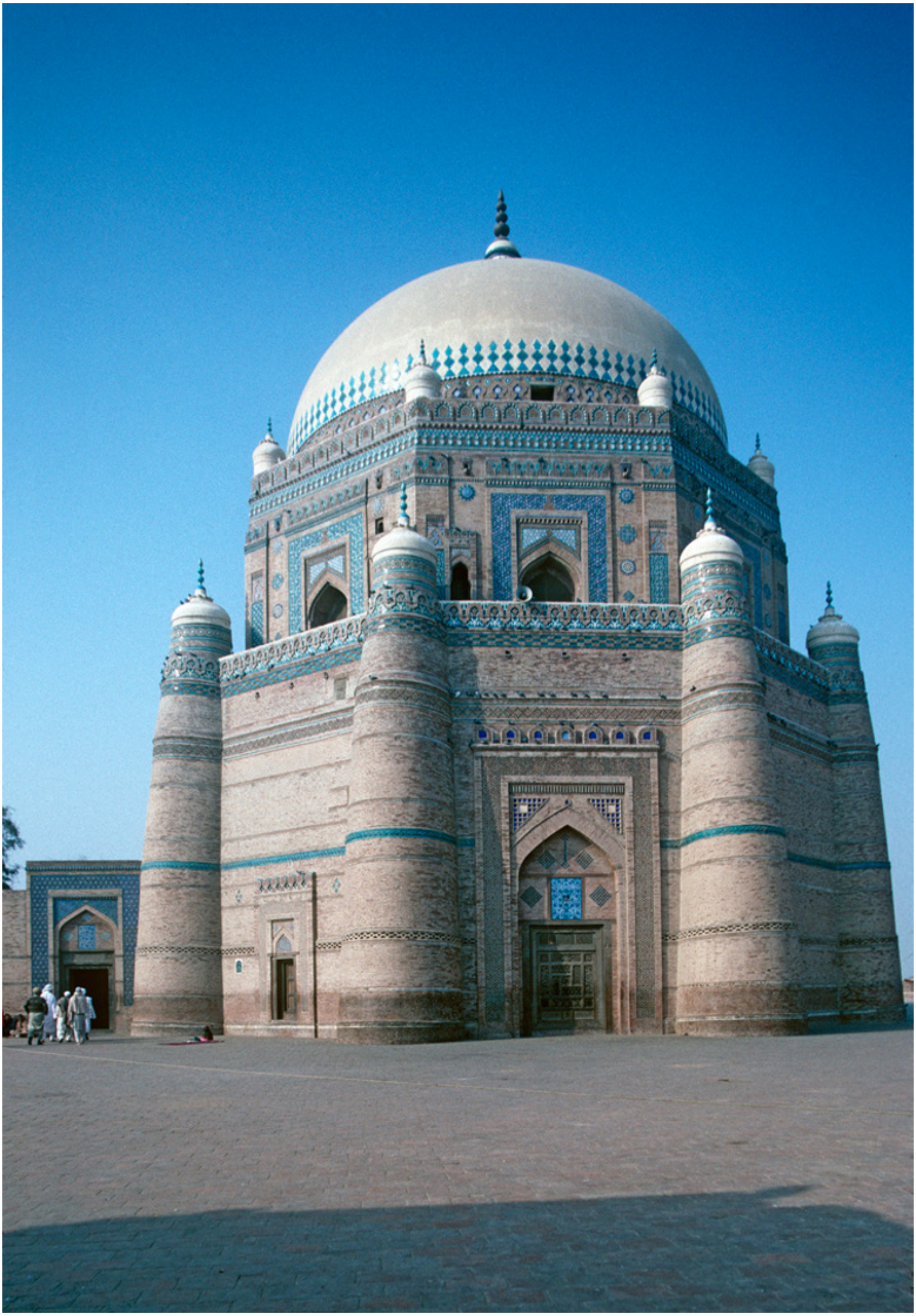

FIGURE 23.7 Exterior of mausoleum of Rukn-i ʿAlam, Multan. Source: Bernard O'Kane. Reproduced with permission.

chronology is not secure – the mausoleum may even have been built by Firuzshah's successor Nasir al-Din Muhammad Shah. The two-story madrasa is an extremely imposing structure, built in two stories in an L shape (the façades are 76 m and 138 m long) at the side of the pool (*hauz*), with arcades punctuated by large and small domes that are further articulated by projecting balconies with wide eaves. The mausoleum is a domed square, made of plaster-covered rubble masonry. The exterior is plain, but elaborate stucco decoration is used for the squinches and dome. It has been suggested that this belongs to the restoration of the tomb by Sikandar Lodi (1507),[6] but the style is in keeping with fourteenth-century work.

Conclusions

The major dynasties of the fourteenth-century Islamic world inherited vastly different subjects, territories, and cultural traditions, leading naturally to equally forceful differences in the architecture produced under their patronage. But one feature is common to them all: patronage was very much a top-down affair, with the rulers commanding most of the resources and therefore commissioning the most important buildings.

The Marinids controlled the least amount of territory. Whether their own architectural patronage was affected by the over ambitious grandiose architectural projects of their predecessors, the Almoravids (such as the unfinished mosque of Hassan at Rabat) is unclear, but their preferences for jewel-like miniatures is striking, unlike the monumental structures of the other three dynasties. This is reflected in two trends that, not surprisingly, have been noted in contemporary Nasrid work at the Alhambra: interiorization and sensuousness. The confinement of exterior decoration to portals leads to an even greater sense of awe at the finish of the interiors.

Even when the opportunity arose, as at Fas Jadid, to impress their aesthetic upon an urban blank slate, its Friday mosque was smaller than its predecessor in the neighboring old city. This could be categorized as pragmatic restraint, an admirable recognition of the unlikelihood of their new foundation outstripping the older city, but it remains in stark contrast to the other dynasties. Types of Marinid foundations also differ radically from the others, with not a single mausoleum known for a secular ruler. The Maliki school of law's antipathy both to tombs and family endowments was clearly a major social and architectural force here.

In addition, the preponderance of madrasas should be noted. In the three other territories considered in this chapter there were tensions between organized and popular religion, usually between the *khanaqah* and the madrasa; but the lack of Sufi institutions in the Maghrib exposed a conflict instead between the ruling Zanata Berber-speaking jurists and the entrenched Arabic-speaking urban ulama. The madrasas were the rulers' chief weapon in this conflict.

Mamluk patronage is exceptional in many ways. Some of the interrelated concepts that characterize it, such as *baraka*, the building and placing of mausoleums within complexes, and the *waqf ahli* have been discussed earlier. But we should also notice the concentration of monuments in the dynasty's capital, Cairo. While it is true that sultans occasionally erected important monuments in Jerusalem or Medina (places of pilgrimage rather than the commercially more important urban centers of Aleppo and Damascus), they preferred Cairo for the vast bulk of their projects, leaving patronage in the provinces to the amirs who were appointed as governors there. It is surprising that the Mamluk aesthetic progressed from the monumental to a concentration on ornamentation. In the fifteenth century one way in which this was manifested was in a series of carved stone domes that are unique in the Islamic world.

The nomadic background of the Mongol Ilkhanids and Timurids ensured that their taste for palaces was oriented towards tents. But from the point of Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam onwards they invested in the conventional range of Islamic structures, and more than that, in an unusual number of complexes, some with an equally unusual variety of functions.

Both the Ilkhanids and Timurids, at least until the end of Timur's reign, invested heavily in monumentality. This was partially accompanied by attenuation of proportions, leading to taller and narrower iwans and dome chambers, the latter, in the Timurid period, exaggerated by double domes. It was also accompanied by greatly increased use of tilework, to the point where it could be used to sheathe whole interiors or exteriors in color. The corollary was that now exteriors of large building were meant to be seen. Chinoiserie decoration, only rarely present in Mamluk architecture, and not at all in the Maghrib, was pervasive.

The Tughluqids commanded probably the largest territory of all, although much of their efforts went into protecting it from Mongol incursions and internal feuds. Their peripheral status is shown by their extensive use of Persian, also their literary language, for foundation inscriptions, rather than the Arabic than was standard elsewhere (O'Kane 2009). Nevertheless, their ambitions are shown in the foundation of three separate cities within Dehli by the first three sultans. But this came with a price: the use of more ephemeral building materials, rubble and stucco, permitted fast large-scale construction, but left them at an aesthetic disadvantage that was not compensated for by sheer monumentality. Only in the Punjab, where the available building materials necessitated brick and tile decoration, did they produce a single building (the Rukn-i ʿAlam) that was the equal of the finest monuments of their contemporaries.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries mark the period before what has been considered a major turning point in Islamic history, the rise of the three major early modern empires, Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal. Were the earlier centuries of similar import?

The fourteenth century witnessed the remarkable growth of the madrasa, frequently allied to a multifunctional complex, and, except for the Maghrib (because of antipathy to it by the dominant Maliki legal school), a concomitant rise in institutions for Sufis such as *zawiya*s and *khanqah*s. This reflects, especially in the fifteenth century, the growing blurring of the roles of the ulama and Sufis. Ibn Battuta's peregrinations in the fourteenth century between the Maghrib and China, either staying in Sufi institutions or gaining employment as a qadi, anticipates this change. Under the Mamluks, Ilkhanids, and Timurids domed dynastic mausoleums were frequently added to these institutions, reflecting both a lingering hostility to individual tombs by the ulema, and the wish to control complexes through family endowments.

The three succeeding dynasties, Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal, each borrowed much from the Timurids, particularly in the decorative arts. The Ottoman vogue for Iznik tiles might not have been so pervasive without the work of an atelier from Tabriz in the fifteenth century (O'Kane 2011). Safavid architecture, although not directly derivative like that of the Uzbeks, owes many of its features to Timurid models. And given that the Mughals still called themselves the Timurids, the continuity in forms of double domed mausoleums, vaulting and decorative motifs is hardly surprising.

Notes

1 The palace was actually referred to as an *istabl* (stable) in the sources.
2 The huge scale of these buildings is reflected in the household expenditures of the Mamluks, besides which the construction of a mosque was a modest expenditure: Behrens-Abouseif 2007: 48.
3 It has an inscription with a fourteenth-century date, but on stylistic grounds it cannot be other than fifteenth century.
4 Here on the ground floor, supplemented in later madrasas by ones on the upper story.
5 Even sultans such as Qaytbay and al-Ghawri skewed the surplus to be as much as 90 percent of the *waqf* income: Petry 1998: 57.
6 Perhaps because of a restoration inscription added by him: Welch 1989: 190, n. 38.

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24

Islamic Architecture and Ornament in China

Nancy S. Steinhardt

Architecture of the Islamic faith stands in every Chinese province and autonomous region. A study of 2009 identified approximately 21 million Muslims in China among whom about 96 percent belonged to the nationalities Hui (nearly 10 million), Uygurs (more than 8 million), and Kazakh (1.25 million). China's Muslim population is said to worship at more than 40 000 mosques where about the same number of men serve as religious leaders (imams) (Gladney 2004; Pew 2009). More than two-thirds of those mosques are in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, a territory that includes the city of Kashgar and borders Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; or in China's Qinghai and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the first bordering Xinjiang and the second nestled amid heavily Muslim populations of Inner Mongolia and Gansu province. Less than one-quarter of one percent of China's current mosques or Muslim cemeteries bear evidence of the 1300-year presence of Islam in China. Those material remains of the first millennium of Islam, during the Tang (618–907), Liao (916–1125), Song (960–1279), Jin (1115–1234), Yuan (1271–1368), and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, are the focus here.

Not only is Islam the unique monotheistic, aniconic religion that maintained a continuous presence in China for such a long time, the pervasiveness of its presence is even more remarkable. The most noteworthy Islamic construction was in China's major cities and towns on international land and sea trade routes. Old mosques remain today at ports along the Eastern China Sea from Nanjing and Songjiang (today Shanghai) southwestward to Guangzhou (Canton); ships embarked from all of them for trade with India and places farther west. Internally mosques survive along China's Grand Canal that connected populations nurtured by the Yellow River in the north to those who fed off the Yangzi River in the south.

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The presence of an international population of merchants in a country's largest cities and ports does not guarantee either that they will worship in the manners of their native lands or that the religious institutions of their homelands will find a place in the foreign land. The construction of mosques, cemeteries, and educational institutions flourished because local as well as the national governments allowed it. Islamic construction was often government sanctioned. Indeed, the requirements of Islamic worship did not challenge the Chinese building system. Chinese craftsmen were able to construct what was needed, and at a few crucial times, a Muslim presence in China was encouraged. The juxtaposition of Muslim worship and Chinese architecture is an extraordinary convergence that began as soon as Muslims arrived in China, shortly after the rise of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century. The only other foreign religion to have such a significant impact in China was Buddhism, present in China since the first and second centuries CE.

Buddhism was one of many religions from the West that had houses of worship in the Chinese capital Chang'an in the seventh century. Others were Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, and Nestorian Christianity (Xiong 2000). Each had worship spaces whose suffix was *si*, a Chinese character whose original meaning had been "official institution" and was subsequently adopted for monasteries and other religious building complexes (Steinhardt 2007). *Si* would be the last character of the Chinese word for mosque, *qingzhensi*, literally "pure, true, religious institution." However, the only evidence of a mosque in Chang'an is an inscription on a much later placard (Chen and Tang 2008: 71). Muslims were in Chang'an, so it can be inferred that prayer occurred in residences. Similarly, domiciles had been converted into Buddhist worship spaces through the ages in China.

China's Earliest Islamic Architecture: The Song Dynasty

The first physical evidence of Islamic architecture in China is from the Song dynasty. By that time the capital was in Kaifeng (then known as Bianliang or Bianjing) in Henan province in central China. Zhuxian Mosque, in a village of that name 22 km south of Kaifeng, was established between 976 and 983. Other mosques with recorded histories from the period of the Tang or Song dynasties are: Ox Street Mosque in Beijing; Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou; Zhengzhou (Henan province) Women's Mosque; Taiyuan (in Shanxi province) Old Mosque; Daxuexixiang Mosque in Xi'an; and Shengyou Mosque in Quanzhou (Chen and Tang 2008; Lu and Zhang 2005). Some would add Huajuexiang Mosque in Xi'an, Fenghuang (Phoenix) Mosque in Hangzhou, Jianzixiang Mosque in Zhenjiang, near Shanghai, and Datong (in Shanxi) Mosque to this list.

The most reliable documentation about the Muslim community and its architecture during this early period comes from Quanzhou, a seaport midway up the coast between Hong Kong and Shanghai and directly opposite the strait from

Taiwan. Quanzhou has accurately been called "the emporium of the world" from 1000 to 1400 (Schottenhammer 2001). Its Muslim community was as vibrant as those of Hindus, Manichaeans, and Christians during these four centuries of Song, Yuan, and early Ming rule. Quanzhou had at least seven mosques in the Song dynasty. Tombs and tombstones record this history. According to Lin Zhiqi, an official and for a time trade commissioner in Quanzhou, a cemetery for foreign merchants, including Muslims, was built between 1162 and 1163. It has not been located. The earliest grave stone inscription dates to 1171 (Chen 1984: XVa–b, XX–XXI; Chen and Kalus 1991: 29–30). There is a record from *c.* 1100 of a school where Muslim children could learn Arabic, established by government approval of the request of members of the Quanzhou community, with the further stipulation that students be sent to the Song court for consideration for government posts (Chen and Kalus 1991: 30). Seven funerary inscriptions in Arabic or Persian from between *c.* 1129 and 1277 survive in Quanzhou (Chen and Kalus 1991: 33).

Golden Age of Islamic Architecture in China: The Mongol Yuan Dynasty

The Yuan dynasty, the period of Mongolian rule, can be called the Golden Age of Islam in China. Although Muslims had actively engaged in commerce in China for many centuries prior to the Mongol conquest, the unique circumstances of a pan-Asian empire opened possibilities unavailable at any earlier time. A multinational population of builders and craftsmen from as far west as Europe was in the service of the Khans. The Mongols sought them out for they believed craftsmen were instilled with God-given talents; often craftsmen were spared when the rest of a city's population was annihilated. The clergy were a second group the Mongols believed had God-given talent that could enhance their own efforts. Religious leaders of many denominations were given audiences with Khans or their wives. Religious persecutions were rare, so that if the Khans cannot be described as tolerant of the religious practices across their empire, it is valid to view them as indifferent (Israeli 2002: 285). Further, the Mongols divided the population of China into four groups: Mongols and their relatives at the top, next *semu*, then Northern Chinese, and at the bottom, Southern Chinese. *Semu* referred to anyone who was neither Mongol nor Chinese. The majority of Muslims already in China or who came to China during the period of Mongolian ascendancy fell into the *semu* category. There were occasional incidents of mistrust and occasional purges, but these were counterbalanced by the fact that when Mongols were not available, *semu* filled the ranks of politics, finance, and the military in Yuan China. In the city of Quanzhou, for example, 28 *dargachi* (government officials of highest rank) were Muslim (Chen and Kalus 1991: 33). Finally, the Mongol government was different from previous Chinese dynasties in its encouragement of an exchange of knowledge between East and West Asia. This would be true even after 1295, the year after Khubilai's death and the year Ghazan Khan (1271–1304) ascended the Il-Khanid throne in Iran and converted to Islam.

Evidence of the powerful presence of Islam in Yuan China is that the oldest extant Arabic Qurʾan produced in China is from this period. Dated 1318 and in two fascicles, today it is in the collection of Dongsi Mosque in Beijing (Chen and Tang 2008: 299). An undated Qurʾan found in Xunhua Salar Autonomous County of Qinghai in 2007 may be from the same time period.[1] The location of the find supports its date, for the Dongsi Mosque Qurʾan is believed to be written by someone of Salar Muslim ethnicity (Chen and Tang 2008: 299). In 2006 a Qurʾan produced in China in 1337 was sold at Christie's in London; like other Yuan Qurʾans, it shows clear affinities with the Qurʾans produced in Ilkhanid Iran.[2] Bronze objects dated to the Yuan period have been found in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Today in the collection of the Ningxia Hui Museum in Guyuan, they include a bowl with incised floral motifs that belonged to a Muslim, excavated in the remains of a walled town, and a bronze plaque with an Arabic inscription inlaid in gold (Chen and Tang 2008: 169). Chinese blue-and-white and cobalt-glazed porcelain objects have been found in this region, to its west in the Chagatay Khanate (today Central Asia), and much farther west, the latter two regions to fall to Timur (1336–1405).

Some 30 of China's mosques bear evidence of use during the period of Mongolian rule. Those in Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Hangzhou, and Yangzhou have both dated inscriptions from the Yuan period and reliable documentation about their buildings. Yuan structures survive at two of them. Yuan associations for other mosques are due to stele inscriptions or local records.

Before turning to them, a few general features of traditional Chinese architecture should be noted. Each was compatible with mosque construction or could easily be adapted to Islamic worship. First, the Chinese building tradition is almost unique in world architecture for its use of standardized building components over millennia. Similarly, once the first mosques were built in China, later mosques would employ similar plans; this conservatism is mirrored in Chinese Qurʾan manuscripts, which perpetuate an Ilkhanid format into the fifteenth century. Second, Chinese architecture is conceived in terms of complexes of buildings, not individual structures. A Buddhist temple is always one among pagodas, education halls, monks' quarters, a library, administrative halls, ceremonial altars, or other buildings. Confucian and Daoist worship halls were amid the same kinds of structures except for the pagoda. Mosques, too, are groups of buildings, among which are prayer halls (*libaitang* in Chinese) as well as buildings for education, residence of the clergy, libraries, and offices. Third, there are standard Chinese arrangements for buildings: they stand along major and less major axial lines parallel or perpendicular to the main one. Some of China's earliest mosques were oriented southward, the most common direction for Chinese construction.

By the Ming dynasty, entry at the east and focus along an east–west line toward the mihrab became standard. Fourth and related, space builds around four-sided courtyards, and even if only three sides are occupied the fourth face is implied in the arrangement. The enclosing space marks the boundary between more sanctified interior architecture and the profane world outside it. Mosques, too, are built around courtyards.

In terms of individual buildings, the core of a Chinese structure is the flexible timber frame, easily adaptable to increase, decrease, or movement of columns to make room for an altar or replace it with a throne or table. Every component of that frame is modular. Knowing the module, replacement owing to damage or movement of parts because of change of purpose is simple. The system permits change from secular to religious use, and from the worship space of one religion to that of another. A Chinese palace or temple hall could be transformed into a Muslim worship space by movement of interior pillars or removal of an altar, yet the roof above, wooden support system, and enclosing courtyard would remain unchanged.

Status is apparent in a Chinese building. Features that determine a building's rank are the measurements and proportions of the module, the height of a platform, use of a plinth, materials such as marble for a foundation platform or gold inlay, balustrade decoration, and roof type. These silent signs inform the viewer of a structure's rank but never its purpose (Buddhist, Daoist, Muslim, palatial, or funerary, for example). A mosque of eminent patronage such as Huajuexiangsi in Xi'an, discussed below, would bear evidence of the high rank of its architecture, but not of its religious affiliation. Chinese architecture is highly polychromed, as are many mosques in China, particularly interior décor. Finally, pre-modern Chinese buildings were put together by craftsmen. The same builders could construct every space and detail of a mosque.

Brightly painted timber-frame buildings with glazed ceramic tile roofs that projected above the walls enclosing them were omnipresent in every city and town in pre-modern China. That is why the entry to Shengyousi Mosque (Arab: Masjid al-Ashab, or Mosque of the Companions) in Quanzhou is so striking. Today it is the only pre-modern mosque in China proper with a stone pointed arch at its entry that so closely resembles *pishtaq*s (projecting portals) constructed in Iran and Central Asia from the tenth century onwards (Figure 24.1). This gray, granite entrance, 11.4 m high, comprises three vaults: a three-sided, semi-circular, ribbed-arched, street-side entry with three recessed levels above the actual entrance and side ogee-arches at the second level; an octagonal vault, also only half of which is installed; and a pure dome. The Shengyousi gateway is also the earliest evidence in China of the translation into stone of a "*muqarnas* concept," clearly imported from the West.

Upon entering Shengyousi, one turned left, roughly westward, to the pillar-supported worship space of approximately 20 m^2. The mihrab is prominently positioned at the center of the west side of this space. The eight windows on the

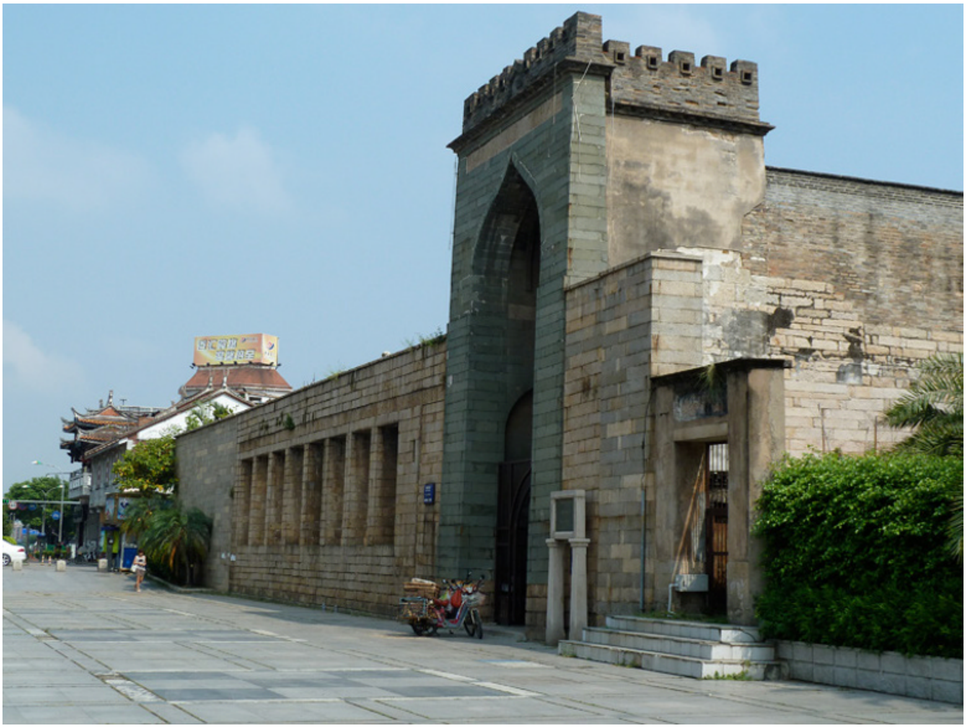

FIGURE 24.1 Entry and wall of Shengyousi, Quanzhou, 1009–1010; repaired 1310–1311. Source: Nancy Steinhardt.

south side of the prayer space are highly unusual in a Chinese setting in which the privacy of a courtyard from the street is standard. Even though the windows would provide the only light source into a 6 m high granite enclosure, this kind of exposure of the worship area is as noteworthy in an Islamic ambiance as a Chinese one. Perhaps the windows are explained by the fact that when the mosque was constructed it was beyond the city walls and thus may have been in a private or Muslim-populated sector of Quanzhou. Or, there may have been an additional enclosed courtyard along the south side.

An inscription at the mosque establishes a foundation date of 400 (1009–1010) for Shengyousi, although it cannot be proved that the mosque today stands on its original site (Fujian Provincial Museum 1991). The other important information in the inscription is that it was renovated in 1310 under the direction of Ahmad ibn Muhammad Quds (Haji Rukah) from Shiraz (Chen 1984: 4). A description of Shengyousi, written in 1350 by Wu Jian and entitled “Qingjingsiji” (Record of the Mosque), states that it was one of six or seven mosques in the city (Chen 1984: 1).

Excavation revealed that the interior of the masjid was supported by at least nine pillars arranged in four rows of two or three. Nothing about its ceiling is known.

The column placement may be traceable to Abbasid-period hypostyle mosques such as the two ninth-century Friday mosques of Samarra. In China, the hypostyle arrangement did not become common until the fifteenth century; the funerary hall (*Ling'endian*) at the tomb of the Yongle emperor (1360–1424) outside Beijing is a building with this kind of complete column grid. There is little doubt that Shengyousi had a noteworthy presence in Quanzhou. Brick and stone architecture existed in subterranean tomb construction in China since the first millennium BCE, and above ground mainly in the form of pagodas. It is most likely Shengyousi was inspired by Islamic architecture, if not from Shiraz then by way of a West Asian builder or patron; the *pishtaq* and *muqarnas* support this idea. It is impossible to assess how many other stone mosques with this kind of formal entry might have stood in China during the Song, Yuan, or later periods.

No other Chinese mosque retains the number of highly significant inscriptions, corroborative information from tombs, or was in a city as international in character as Quanzhou in Song and Yuan times. Forty-five dated funerary inscriptions and 119 without dates were documented in the 1990s, and more have come to light since then (Chen and Kalus 1991: 101; Wu 2005). They record a community that included Husayn bin Muhammad (d. 1171); Mansur (d. 1277); Haji ibn Aubak (d. 1290), whose gravestone refers to him as a martyr with the justification that "Whoso hath died a stranger [in a strange land] hath died a martyr"; the female Fatima bint Naina Ahmad (d. 1301); Amir Sayyid Ajala (Saidianchi) Tughan-shah (d. 1302), whose famous father is discussed below; Naina Muhammad (d. 1303 or 1305); Aklab ʿUmar (d. 1303); Husayn bin Haji (d. 1304). Fifteen other tombstones are preserved from the Yuan period, many with the line that the deceased male died a martyr in a strange land; and many more still with illegible names or dates or from post-Yuan times. Dozens of additional Islamic funerary stones remain in Quanzhou.

Tombs and inscriptions of the Guo family have provided some of the most important history of Muslim settlers in Quanzhou. Numbering more than 10 000, the Guo are an archetypical Hui family, tracing their lineage to Muslim settlers in the Song and Yuan periods, but through intermarriage with Chinese, surviving until today. Inscriptions on the Quanzhou Islamic stones are either in Arabic or Persian. Yet each provides the *hijri* date according to the Islamic lunar calendar as well as according to the regnal year of the current Chinese emperor. The imagery that they employ belongs to the distinctive international style used for funerary art in the port cities of southeastern China during the Song and Yuan. Variously inscribed in Syriac, Latin, and Manichaean as well as Arabic and Persian, depending on their patrons, the stones bore images of deities, winged flying beings, and symbols such as the crucifix specific to a faith. By contrast, cloud and floral patterns are found on the borders of all, including cenotaphs and tombstones produced for Muslims (Figure 24.2).

The Muslim community in neighboring Guangzhou (Canton) in the Yuan period may not have had as prolific a funerary legacy as the one in Quanzhou, but

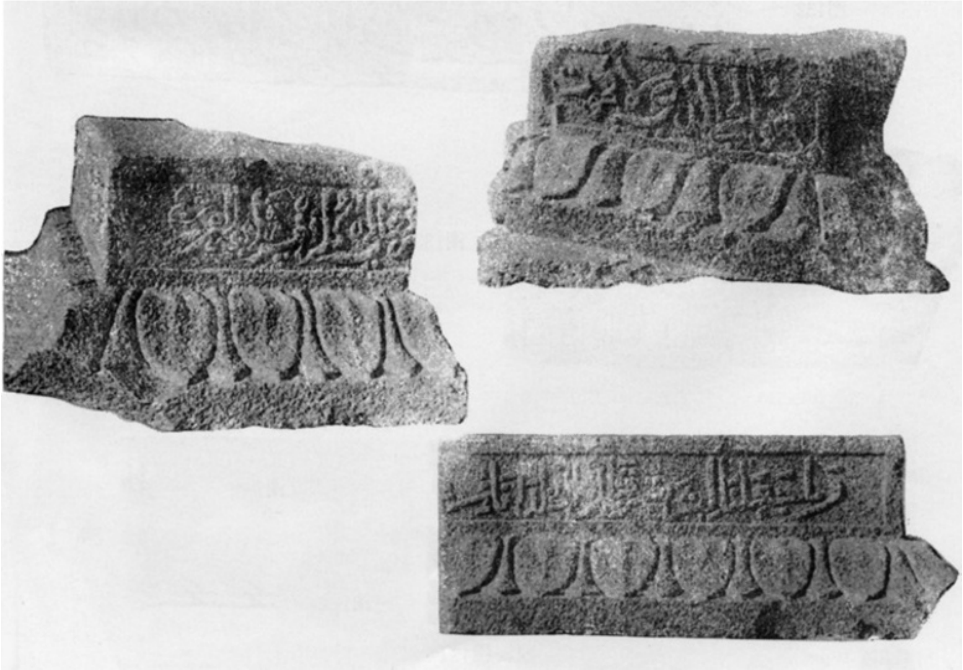

FIGURE 24.2 Pieces of cenotaphs with lotus petals, standard imagery in Buddhist pagodas and altar bases, along base level, Quanzhou Maritime Museum. Source: Chen 1984: pl. 45.

the Huaishengsi (Cherishing the Sage [i.e., Muhammad] Mosque) retains a building as distinctive in China as the Shengyousi *pishtaq*. Its plan exemplifies the convergence of Chinese and Islamic architecture as well as any mosque extant today. The extraordinary structure is the minaret, named Guangta, or Tower of Light – a literal translation of minaret (*manar*) – by local residents in the Song dynasty (Yue 1981: 125) (Figure 24.3). The syllable *ta* in its name is the Chinese character most often translated as pagoda. Like the use of *si* for mosque, we observe the Chinese inclination to incorporate religious architecture of any faith into the inherent system of religious names as well as forms. In addition to a translation of *manar*, explanations for the word *Guang* in the tower's name are: that it served as a beacon for ships coming into the Guangzhou port; that it was a tower from which the direction of the wind was determined; that the name refers to the enlightenment anticipated by a call to prayer; or that the tremendous height and unique shape may have been symbols of the light of Islam in Guangzhou (Liu 1985: 13).

Elevated on a circular platform, the Tower of Light is a white plaster building 35.75 m in height at the southwest corner of the mosque complex. There is no doubt it was visible far beyond the mosque itself. The minaret is more than 20 m in front of the current main gate, one of the reasons it is assumed to be the oldest building at the site. Most date the minaret to repairs of 1350, but some believe

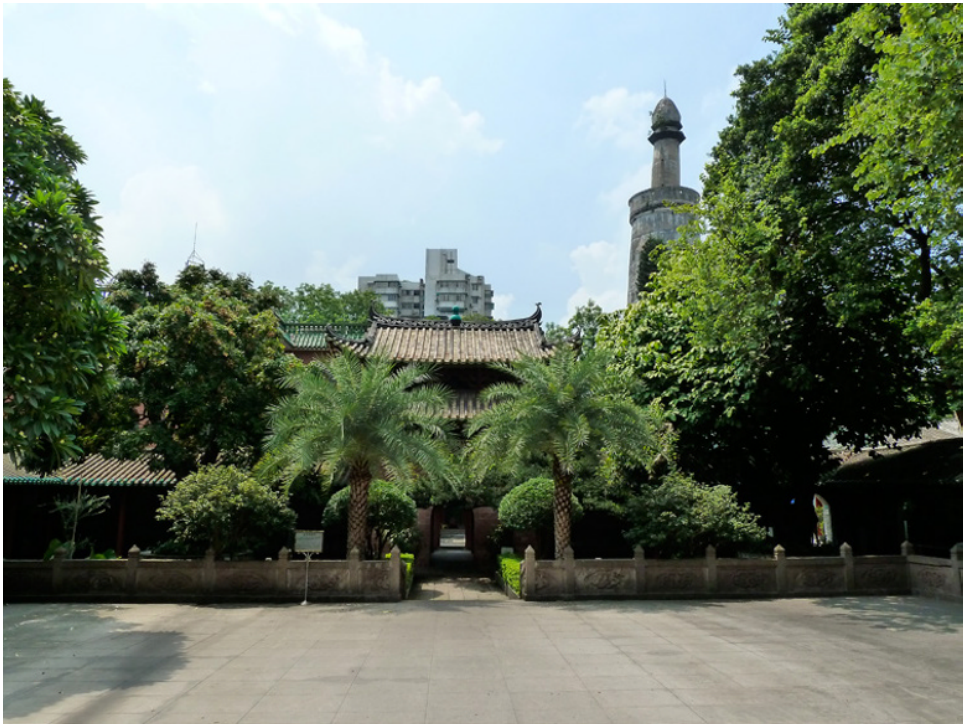

Figure 24.3 Guangta (minaret), Huaisheng Mosque, Guangzhou, *c*. 1350 with repairs as late as the twentieth century. Source: Nancy Steinhardt.

it is more than a century earlier. The Song scholar-author Yue Ke (1183–1234) wrote in *Tingshi* (*Bedside-Table History*), a treatise of collected jottings about places and experiences typical of educated officials of his day, that the building was like no tower he had ever seen. He calls the structure *lou*, the designation for a tall, multistory building (Yue 1981: 125–127). There is no evidence Guangta was ever multistoried. Probably its height was the reason Yue Ke used the term. He also wrote that it could be ascended from the interior where there were 10 stairs on each level. One wonders if he himself had been inside or if this statement is based on a verbal or written description. One further wonders if Yue Ke had ties to the Muslim community in Guangzhou or if non-Muslims were permitted entrance to the mosque or its minaret.

Approaching the platform and continuing through doors to the inside are two sets of stairs, each rising through the minaret's interior and meeting at a platform. Yue Ke relates that a golden phoenix once stood at its top (Yue 1981: 125–127), but today there is a simpler bulb shape. A record of destruction in the Ming period (1368–1644) mentions a change of the top projection to the jewel-like form seen there today. If the date of the emendation is accurate, it is consistent with 1350 as the earliest date for the current minaret as well as the adjoining mosque.

Like the *pishtaq* at Shengyousi, the Tower of Light suggests Islamic sources. The cylindrical form recalls Iranian minarets, such as the one at Sangbast (*c.* 1100); in addition, double staircases are found at the minaret of Jam, dated 1174. When compared with pre-modern Chinese buildings, the rarest feature of Guangta is the circular ground plan. Perhaps the plan was inspired by pagoda architecture, although no cylindrical structure like this exists in China. Brick, octagonal pagodas from the Song dynasty, the 84-m high Liaodi Pagoda of Kaiyuan Monastery in Ding county, Hebei, dated 1055, and the 76-m pagoda of Bao'en Monastery in Suzhou (1131–1162) are possible examples that might have influenced the builders of Guangta, for each has interior stairs and a platform at every level. The Suzhou pagoda could have been known to the Guangta builders, for it is about midway between Hangzhou and Yangzhou, where Islam flourished in the Song and Yuan periods. More than 20 pagodas of this type survive in China today. Many exceed 70 m in height, more than twice the height of Guangta. In terms of construction materials, although the walls of Guangta were probably refaced during repairs of 1935, lime-based plaster was used as a coating for walls before the fourteenth century in China. No other building of Huaishengsi predates the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

The Huaisheng Mosque is oriented due south, like the vast majority of Chinese religious and imperial building complexes. It is approached along the north–south building line via three gates, with a T-shaped approach in front of the third one. The T-shaped approach has a long history in Chinese planning, particularly in eminent construction. It was used in the Forbidden City in Beijing. The covered arcades that begin east and west of the third gate of Huaishengsi create courtyards fundamental to Chinese spatial planning. The northward sections of the arcade enclose a 15 m^2 platform, known in Chinese as *yuetai*, which provides access to the even larger hall behind it. In China, *yuetai* of this size often are for ceremonies and always lead to the front door of the main building of a monastery or palace. Here, the plan breaks with Chinese custom. The *yuetai* indeed anticipates the most important hall, the worship space, but to enter one must walk to the eastern end of the arcade and turn 90 degrees left (northward) to a gate that is the actual entrance of the masjid. The mihrab is on the western wall, in the direction of Mecca, and thus at Huaishengsi, the entrance to the worship hall is directly in front of the mihrab on the opposite end of the building. This directional change is evident only after one has passed through three gates and ascended the *yuetai*, or alternately has walked through a small courtyard east of the *yuetai*. The alternate building axis created by the entrance for prayer is concealed behind gates, courtyards, arcades, and walls so that the single, crucial feature of Muslim worship is apparent neither from the entry to the mosque nor after entrance into the first two courtyards. Indeed, the mihrab is concealed in an otherwise Buddhist or Daoist or Confucian building arrangement. This concealment is an extraordinary contrast to the powerfully prominent minaret that so clearly identified the function of the space. With no attempt to hide the minaret, one concludes that there was no attempt here to conceal that this was a mosque. Rather, the Chinese arrangement of religious and palatial space was adapted to Muslim worship.

Some believe the oldest Muslim community in China was in Guangzhou. A placard in Arabic at the entrance to Huaisheng Mosque, stating that it was founded by the Prophet Muhammad's uncle in 627, is in all likelihood spurious. However, tombs and inscriptions in a Muslim cemetery in the suburbs of Guangzhou raise the possibility of an Islamic presence in the city in Tang times. The date on the oldest inscription is variously read as corresponding to 629 or 652 (Chen and Tang 2008: 109), with the latter date *a priori* more likely than the former, if it was not indeed forged later.

Tombs are of two main types. The first are cubic with domed ceilings and roofs. These are known in Chinese as *gongbei*, following the Arabic *qubba* or the Persian *gunbad*, and in fact echo the forms of their West Asian sources. The second type is the cenotaph style, a multitier stone monument with cloud and floral motifs or vegetal arabesque patterns on each level of all sides and lotus petals at the base. The cemetery in Guangzhou is enclosed by a white plaster wall and entered via a Chinese *pailou*, a three-entry ceremonial stone archway supported on four cloud-patterned feet. Tombstones were restored through the ages, most of them in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) or later.

The third mosque with definite ties to the Yuan period is Xianhesi (Transcendent Crane Mosque) in Yangzhou, the southern terminus of the Grand Canal. Historical writings about this mosque state it was built by Puhading (Burhan al-Din), who arrived in the city in 1272. His death is recorded as 1275–1276 (Lu and Zhang 2005: 45), right before the Song city fell to the Mongols. No buildings survive from that period, nor is there anything about the arrangement of buildings at the mosque today that indicates a Song date. Puhading's tomb is in a courtyard together with worship space, outside the city. The architecture is mainly Chinese in style, with a stone staircase framed by a marble balustrade decorated with stone lions at the approach, and pillar-supported buildings with bracket sets and ceramic tile roofs. Puhading's cenotaph is of the Chinese style used by Muslims: five layers of decreasing perimeter elevated on a base whose border is decorated with floral patterns. A placard above the front gate reads, "Tomb of Puhading, a holy man from Western regions."

The fourth of the southeastern Chinese mosques is in Hangzhou, south of Shanghai, where there also is a Muslim cemetery. First built in the Tang dynasty and destroyed in the Song, Huangfeng (Phoenix) Mosque today is believed to be about half its size in Song or Yuan times. At one time it was one of six mosques in Hangzhou. A man named Alaoding (ʿAlaʾ al-Din?) was in charge of its rebuilding during 1314–1320. The mosque was rebuilt again in 1451, followed by major renovations of the Qing dynasty.

The worship hall of Phoenix Mosque has three side-by-side domes, a central, octagonal one above the room with the mihrab at its west end, flanked by rooms with hexagonal domes. In the main hall of the Buddhist monastery Baoguosi, built in 1013 in Yuyao, about 225 km east of Hangzhou, three domes similarly span three interior bays. It is unknown if the three-dome arrangement was unique in the eleventh century, but the location in southeastern China where Islam flourished suggests the building type may have been a source of Phoenix Mosque. This unique mosque arrangement also may be related to its name. In 1052–1053 a Phoenix Hall was constructed at the Buddhist palace-monastery Byōdōin in Uji, Japan. It was configured in the manner of the creature as a core building with two side wings (Steinhardt 2007: 13–14). The tombs of Buhatiya'er and two descendants laid to rest to his sides are in the Hangzhou suburbs. Buhatiya'er had come from Mecca in the late Song period to transmit medical practices of West Asia.

The most influential Muslim in China under Mongolian rule was Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din ʿUmar al-Bukhari (1211–1279), known in Chinese as Saidianchi Zhansiding and as Wuma'er, born, as his name indicates, in Bukhara. Said to be a twenty-sixth generation descendant of the Prophet, after the fall of his region to the Mongols, Shams al-Din joined Chinggis Khan's forces in battle, became a military leader and government official under subsequent khans, and rose to financial minister of the Yuan Empire. His biography is recorded in Chinese and Persian sources, and he and his son are mentioned by Marco Polo. In 1274, after the fall of the southwestern province of Yunnan to the Mongols, Khubilai Khan appointed him governor of the Dali Kingdom (in Yunnan). During the five years until his death, Sayyid Ajjal brought Islam to this region while at the same time promoting Confucian learning and building houses of worship for both religions as well as Buddhism. The entire city of Kunming mourned his death and erected an archway to him that stands in a heavily restored version today. Sayyid Ajjal received the posthumous title Prince of Xianyang (a city in Shaanxi), and according to some, is buried in Shaanxi province. Tradition says that Sayyid Ajjal both repaired and built mosques in Yunnan. Two of Kunming's current mosques are associated with him (Na Weixin 1994: 72–94).

The continuous movement across Asia during the Yuan dynasty resulted in several monuments almost surely built by peoples from the West that stand in Chinese territory today. The tomb of Tughluq Timür (*c.* 1330–1363) in Huocheng (Yili/Almaliq) in northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is one (Figure 24.4). A seventh generation descendant of Chinggis Khan, Tughluq Timür came to power in the Chagatay Khanate of the Yuan Empire in 1346 and converted to Islam the next year. The population of his Khanate, some 16 000, converted in 1352. Tughluq Timür's tomb is in every way the mausoleum of a fourteenth-century Muslim ruler: brick with a tiled front façade. It has a rectangular ground plan of 6 m across the front, 15.8 m in depth, and is 7.7 m high. The interior is two-storied. Above the corners are *muqarnas*, a feature seen at the Shengyousi gateway in Quanzhou. At the same time, bracket sets are molded above the eight columns that divide the sections of the octagonal upper level. This kind of mimicry of Chinese wood framing is standard in Chinese brick tomb interiors. Other than these corner features, Tughluq Timür's tomb is a structure

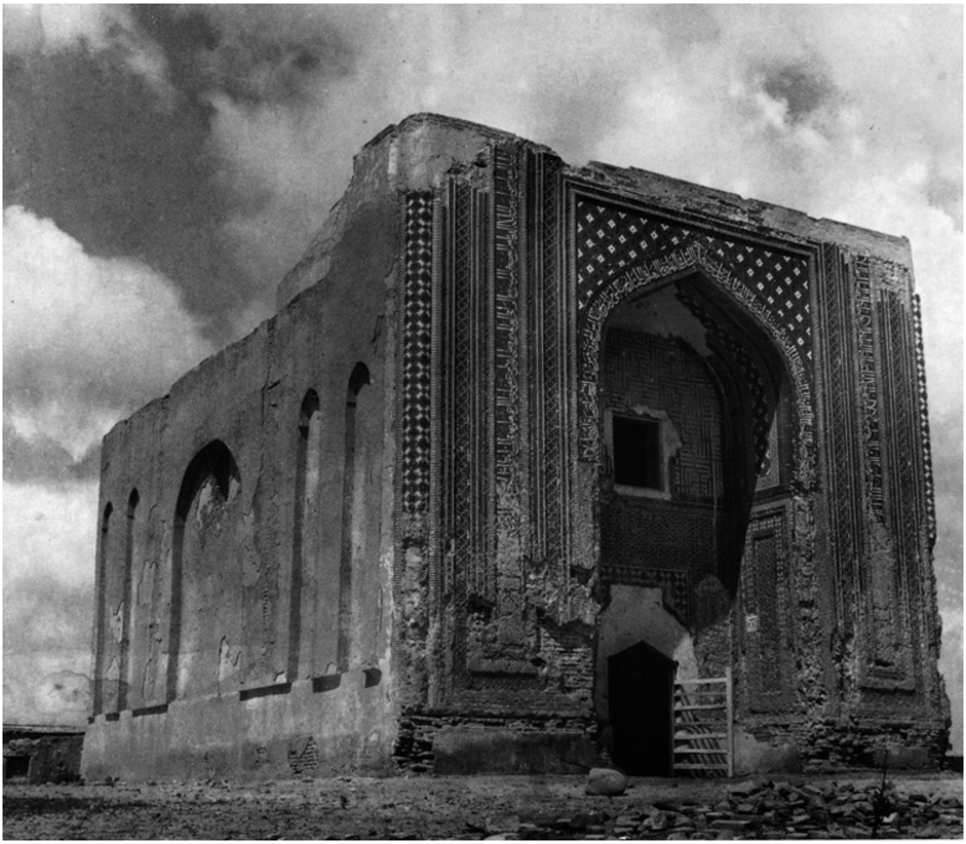

FIGURE 24.4 Tomb of Tughluq Timür, Huocheng, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, *c.* 1363. Source: Chinese Academy of Architecture 1982: 130.

whose closest comparisons are found in the roughly contemporary *mazar* (funerary shrine) that belongs to Buyan Quli Khan in Bukhara (*c.* 1358) or in those of the Timurid Shah-i Zinda cemetery complex at Samarqand (O'Kane 2004).

Possible precedents for a structure such as Tughluq Timür's *mazar* have been found among remains of the Tangut (Western Xia) Empire (1038–1227) that was centered in Ningxia and spread into Gansu, Shaanxi, and Inner Mongolia. An example is in Hei(shui)cheng, Khara-khoto, the city introduced to the west by Petr Kozlov that today is in Inner Mongolia (Kozlov 1925). A squarish, domed, adobe structure with a *pishtaq* was constructed for an unknown occupant under Tangut rule. Pages of a Qurʾan, marriage contracts, and other documents in Persian attest to the presence of Muslims at this Tangut commercial center (Chen and Tang 2008: 74).

Objects that came to China for use in worship and daily life have been found in every location where there were Muslims. An iron magic square was uncovered at the ruins of the palace of Khubilai's son Mangela, Prince of Anxi, today Xi'an

(National Museum of China 1997: 35; Xia 1960). Bronze objects found farther west include a bowl with incised floral motifs excavated in Guyuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and a bronze plaque with an Arabic inscription inlaid in gold, both today in the Ningxia Hui Museum (Chen and Tang 2008: 169).

Islamic Architecture in Ming China

Return to native rule in the Ming dynasty did not diminish the practice of Islam in China, even though trade along the southeastern coastal cities did not reach the levels of Song or Yuan times. China's most famous mosque dates to the Ming period. Located in the old capital Xi'an, it is associated with one of China's most famous Muslims. Huajuexiangsi (Mosque on Huajue Lane) is said to have been founded by the seafarer-eunuch-official Zheng He (1371–1435), born a Muslim named Ma Sanbao in Yunnan province (where Sayyid Ajall had been so influential a century earlier). Zheng He also built a mosque in the southern capital Nanjing. The Xi'an mosque was restored during the reigns of Yongle (r. 1403–1424), Chenghua (r. 1465–1487), Kangxi (r. 1661–1722), and Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820). This attention to the mosque is not that unusual: each was a long reign that saw the restoration of countless temples and monasteries throughout China. The interest in this mosque complex lies in its scale, the degree of preservation, the quality of its buildings, and their distinctive Chinese style (Cowen 1983).

Huajuexiang Mosque consists of five courtyards and an extremely long axial building line, oriented due west. As a result, the front gate leads directly to the front entrance of the prayer hall. The first courtyard is formed by a screen wall, side gates, a central *pailou* (ceremonial gate) erected in the Qing dynasty, and a five-bay gate. A stone gate elevated on a platform is in the second courtyard which contains two stele pavilions. One stele records a repair in 1606 and the other a repair in 1772. Directly behind the stone gate, at the focus of the third courtyard, is an octagonal structure named Shengxinlou (Examining the Heart Tower). Its height and shape have led some to assume it was a minaret, but this has never been confirmed. Behind the octagonal structure are the last two courtyards and the main part of the mosque. Courtyard four begins with three parallel gates, each of which can be entered from each of its four sides. To either side are lecture halls, the southern one joining a hall for ablutions in the third courtyard. A pair of octagonal pavilions and a pair of four-sided stele pavilions stand in front of the prayer hall, which leads from the fourth into the fifth courtyard. The fourth courtyard ends with a *yuetai*, to either side of which are screen walls. The prayer hall and adjoining mihrab are the only structures in the last courtyard. The back courtyard terminates at a screen wall (Figure 24.5).

The remarkably Chinese architectural features – *pailou*, ceramic tile roofs, an octagonal timber-frame pavilion, and screen walls – and the contrasting Islamic orientation toward Mecca render an outstanding resolution of Chinese and

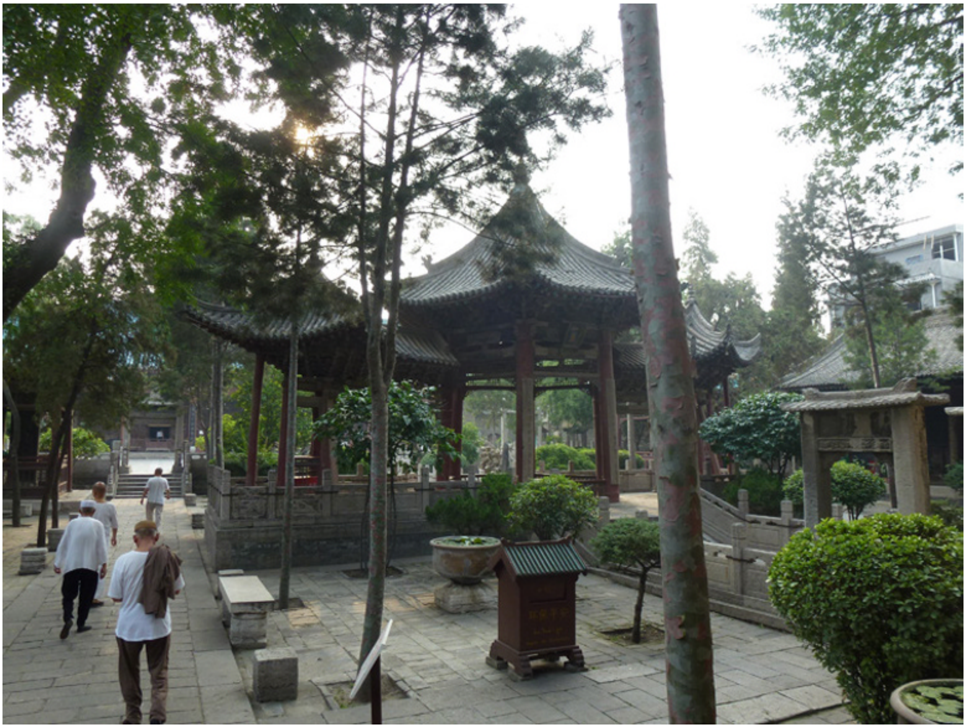

FIGURE 24.5 Huajuexiang Mosque, Xi'an, Ming period and later. Source: Nancy Steinhardt.

Islamic features. More impressive even than the convergence, the Chinese elements are those of China's most eminent architectural tradition. The *pailou* and screen walls, for example, bear details with counterparts at the Qing (1655–1911) imperial tombs and in the Confucian Temple in Qufu, the latter constructed over the last 1000 years. The octagonal pavilion at the Xi'an mosque compares in plan and structural details with a Qing-period building at the Temple to the Northern Peak in Quyang, Hebei province, where the emperor or his surrogate performed imperial rites. The long, axial plan recalls China's most distinguished religious complexes such as the imperial-sponsored Longxing Monastery in Zhengding, Hebei, or the above-mentioned Confucian Temple where the emperor himself came to worship. Imperial-style architectural detail does not mean that the emperor came to the Xi'an mosque. It does suggest that Zheng He's mosque was a privileged site (Steinhardt 2007: 345–349).

Ox Street Mosque in Beijing is similarly complex and has a long history. The street name makes reference to the fact that Muslims eat beef rather than pork. In 960 a Muslim seafarer known in Chinese as Gewanxianding came with his son to this district of Beijing, then the southern capital of the Liao dynasty, to teach Islam. At the time, the mosque was one of the four great *si* in the capital. The son

Nasuluding (Nasr al-Din?) was presented with an official title and given permission to build a mosque. Tombs for imams were constructed there in 1280, 1283, 1309, and 1312. Extant buildings and stele are from the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Like Huajuexiang Mosque, Ox Street Mosque is oriented east–west, but unlike the Xi'an mosque, the entrance to Ox Street Mosque is on the west. The second unusual feature is the presence of two multistory buildings. A screen wall marks the western entry. A Chinese ceremonial archway is behind it and a hexagonal pavilion, the first tall building, known as Wangyuelou (Tower for Viewing the Moon [to determine the end of the fast during Ramadan]) is right behind it. Following is the worship hall, entry to which, if coming from the west, requires walking along its long side and turning north and then westward. The minaret, the second tall structure, here named *bangkelou* after the Persian *bang* (call to prayer), stands behind (east of) the worship hall. At the mosque today a lecture hall is the last structure on the west–east line. Bangkelou was constructed in the Qing period. In all likelihood, entry for worship at one time was from the east. Evidence of an eastward approach to worship is a small, three-by-two-bay antechamber in front of the prayer hall. The huge prayer space accommodates 1000 congregants.

As we have seen in mosques discussed above, regardless of the location on the street or how one reaches the worship space, it is always possible to orient the mihrab and its qibla toward Mecca. The orientational indicators are all that are necessary for the worshiper. Every building of the Chinese mosque complex can be constructed as indistinguishable from a Chinese equivalent: screen wall, gate, lecture hall, educational hall, stele pavilion, residential space for the religious leader, burial area for eminent clergy, minaret, and the main worship space. The configuration of the worship space can vary. Most often it has front and back interior spaces, sometimes with an additional antechamber or porch, and usually it is positioned on the primary building line. Interior features most common in a mosque (mihrab, qibla, minbar, and maqsura) can be made with local materials by Chinese craftsmen; and other interior features often found in mosques, such as a domed ceiling, either were part of Chinese building history before Islam came to China or could be incorporated into the worship space. The more general features in mosques or mosque plans that do not bear religious significance such as construction around courtyards, enclosing arcades and walls, intense decoration, and stone inscriptions that record the history of a site, are found in almost any religious complex in China. Auxiliary spaces that developed in response to the presence of a mosque, such as madrasas, caravanserais, other lodging for pilgrims and visitors, along with markets and other open places for socialization, also find their counterparts in Chinese religious architectural space. Only occasionally was a pre-modern mosque in China constructed to proclaim its difference. The Guangzhou and Quanzhou mosques are notable examples. The ability to combine and comingle elements of Chinese architecture with necessities of Muslim worship, and sometimes to conceal features such as the entry to the masjid on the opposite side of the mihrab, contributed to the successful construction and perpetuation of Islamic architecture in China.

In the seventeenth century, domed mausoleums (*gongbei*) began to appear in China. Today they are found almost exclusively in the vicinity of Linxia county of Gansu province in central China, near the meeting points of Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai. Nearly 70 domed tombs remain in Ningxia, but no pre-Qing building survives among them (Bi and Yi 2009). By some accounts there are 300 domed burial spaces in Linxia county alone. They comprise Qing or later buildings (Zhang 2009). The majority were built for shaykhs of the Sufi Naqshbandiyya order, four of whom entered China from Central Asia in the late Ming period and flourished in the early Qing dynasty (Dillon 1996: 22–23; Lipman 1997: 63–72).

Other Evidence of Islamic Material Culture in China

The most enduring legacy of pre-modern Islam in China is architecture. Ritual objects and goods of daily life used by Muslims are equally numerous. Yet it is rare to be able to prove that any of these material remains made with Chinese materials was produced exclusively for practitioners of Islam. Bronze incense burners, for example, stand in front of Muslim worship halls and on tables inside them. The most famous goods such as blue-and-white porcelain with patterns common in West Asian ceramic wares and sometimes with Arabic inscriptions often were secular items for use in China or for export (Li *et al.* 2010: 540–559). Cloisonné vases now in the collections of mosques similarly could have been purchased or gifted as exotica. Paintings and calligraphy also entered mosques through the ages. Some with purely secular subjects, including human figures, are now in museums in China. How they came to mosques is usually unknown, but one wonders if the prohibition against figural representation in religious spaces lapsed among Muslims in China. Other goods on paper such as dedicatory or salutary writings, as well as placards with glorifications and Qur'anic verses or lines of hadith, are indistinguishable in materials employed and formats from Chinese equivalents at Buddhist or Daoist or Confucian temples.

Stele and decorative stonework and woodwork, the latter two often with inlay, are highly informative about the processes of adaptation, convergence, and/or assimilation of Muslim goods and Chinese techniques. Coffins and cenotaphs in standard Islamic shapes may have floral patterns including lotus petals that are ubiquitous in Buddhist stonework (Figure 24.2). Decoration in various materials on enclosing or screen walls at mosques such as Huajuexiangsi and Ox Street Mosque can be indistinguishable from their counterparts at Chinese temple complexes; woodwork patterns in maqsuras and elaboration of mihrabs include the same floral motifs and honeysuckle and vine patterns carved on wooden altars or door panels in Chinese religious and palatial environments; sometimes they appear to be interchangeable in the Chinese and Islamic context. A few extraordinary convergences of Chinese object and Islamic use have occurred. In the Qing period, bovine scapulae, the media of oracle bone inscriptions used for divination in the Shang dynasty (*c.* 1600–1046 BCE), were used by Muslim children as writing tablets (Chen and Tang 2008: 311).

The intrigue as well as success of Islamic architecture and decoration in China is that from perhaps as early as the seventh century until today none of the requirements of Muslim ritual was compromised. Every structure and space, each ritual component of them, and certainly decorative details could be accomplished by Chinese craftsmen and was compatible with the Chinese architectural landscape and its decorative environment. Through the ages, Chinese visual culture did not change as a result of the presence of Islam. Islamic architecture and decoration was as easily adapted in China as had been Buddhist worship and ritual spaces when they entered a Confucian world in the early centuries CE. To a Chinese resident of a pre-modern city or town, the mosques and Muslim cemeteries conformed to existing structural types and were almost always made of materials that defined Chinese architecture. To a Muslim, the same buildings fulfilled the requirements of Islamic prayer space. The blending was possible because it is so easy to adapt the Chinese building system and because Islamic worship did not require features that differentiated its architecture on the outside from that of Buddhism, Confucianism, or Daoism. Islamic ritual, from birth to burial, thereby flourished in communities across China.

If Islamic architecture and design did have an impact in China, it is perhaps in the increased popularity of certain decorative patterns. Perhaps the label Sino-Islamic is appropriate for a few objects such as Chinese stele with Arabic inscriptions and cenotaphs with lotus petal decoration. Occasionally, a minaret such as the one in Guangzhou or the *pishtaq* in Quanzhou would emblazon the Chinese landscape, but much more often the mosque and every structural and decorative feature that comprised it was by most measures hard to distinguish from other construction across China’s vast terrain and multimillennial history. Or so it was through most of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1980s, Chinese mosques came more to resemble their counterparts in Iran and on the Arabian Peninsula. Today China’s mosques are buildings of global Islam, easily distinguishable from new Buddhist or Daoist temples, which still retain and reproduce features shared by mosques discussed here.

Notes

1 http://english.cntv.cn/program/cultureexpress/20130606/102253.shtml (accessed 2 February 2017).

2 http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/monumental-quran-yuan-dynasty-china-8-jumada-4684937-details.aspx?intObjectID=4684937 (accessed 2 February 2017).

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25

Chinese and Turko-Mongol Elements in Ilkhanid and Timurid Arts

Part 1: The Mongols (c. 1250–1350)

Yuka Kadoi

The Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century exerted a decisive impact on the shaping of a new sociocultural identity across great swathes of the Islamic world. With the rise of an empire in the heart of the Eurasian continent – the largest of this kind in history – the Islamic heartlands of West Asia were, for the first time, merged into a single political unit under the control of pagan nomads, spanning from China to southern Russia. Following the overthrow of the Fatimid Ismaʿilis in northern Iran and, ultimately, the fall of the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad in 1258, the invasion dealt a serious, unrecoverable economic blow to some regions, including the eastern provinces of Khurasan. Yet this political upheaval was followed by a cultural renaissance under the auspices of the *Pax Mongolica* (Mongol Peace), which enabled the exchange of people, goods, and ideas on a global scale. The formation of an unprecedented transcultural environment facilitated a dynamic re-encounter of two ancient civilizations – the Persianate world in West Asia and China in East Asia (Allsen 2001; Kadoi 2009).

Provoked by a recurrent idea of *al-Sin* – literally things "Chinese," associated with cultural allure and an unequivocal sense of rarity and beauty (Bosworth *et al.* 1997) – there was a growing fascination in Islamic West Asia with goods from faraway lands. This resulted in a significant shift of artistic taste in almost all genres of the arts in the eastern Islamic lands (Mashriq). This transformation was especially felt in the visual and material cultures of the Mongol khanate of Iran,

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called the Ilkhanate (1256–1353), literally "a land of subordinates to the Great Khan of China," the emperor of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). By contrast, it had little impact on the arts of the Islamic west (Maghrib), comprising the western regions of North Africa and Spain.

Although the study of the Mongol Empire was treated as a serious topic of investigation well before the age of globalization, it has particularly flourished in recent years, owing to a growing interest in multiculturalism and transculturalism.[1] Much effort has been made to appraise the history of this transcontinental empire. Yet the empire's intriguing art history in general – interconnecting East Asian, Middle Eastern, and European visual cultures – the experimental character of Ilkhanid art and its ability to transcend boundaries in particular certainly merits further investigation.[2]

Textiles as Political Legitimacy and Cultural Identity

In the course of their invasion of Eurasia, the Mongols brought a number of new artistic concepts, directly or indirectly, to the Islamic cultural sphere through portable objects of Chinese or broadly East and Central Asian origin. Among the media of the arts that were deeply implicated in cross-cultural exchanges during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, textiles were central to the transmission of ideas. Being nomads, the Mongols exploited the intrinsic material value of textiles. Brocade (*nasij*, cloth of gold and silk) was considered a commodity equivalent to gold (*altan*), and its chromatic opulence, often combined with other strong color components, such as blue and red, was symbolically associated with imperial authority and ideology in Mongol society (Allsen 1997: 46–70). The Mongols equally explored the performative quality of dress as an expression of identity, status, and dynastic claims. The visual singularity of Mongol dress is still noticeable in extant examples of the short-sleeved "Tartar coat" (*qabaʾ al-tatariyya*) with its hem crossing the chest diagonally from left to right (Dang 2003). Judging by those depicted in detail in manuscript paintings attributable to Ilkhanid Iran, some distinctive types of Mongol fashion accessories – ranging from various types of feathered and brimmed hats for high-ranking Mongol men, the chimney-like headgear (Mong. *boγthaγ*, Chin. *gugu*) for high-ranking Mongol women, the four-lobed shoulder attachment called the cloud collar (*yunjian*) to the embroidered square badge known as the Mandarin square (*buzi*) – appear to have also been integrated into West Asian sartorial modes at that time (Kadoi 2009: 32, 173, 182, 203–204, 214). This also indicates that Mongol nomadic customs exerted a cultural impact on the ceremonial practices of the Ilkhanid court.

Sumptuously woven silk products from the Mongol Empire, not only those imported from East Asia and Central Asia but also those made in West Asia, were in turn so highly praised in Europe that this type of textile eventually came to be known and appreciated as the *panni tartarici*, Tartar cloth or "cloth of gold," many of which found their way to church treasuries and later museum collections. Tangible evidence of this fashion for "cloth of gold" in fourteenth-century Europe can be found in a group of textiles from eastern Iran or broadly Mongol Eurasia that were discovered in the tomb of Cangrande della Scale (d. 1329) in Verona and a textile with the name of the Ilkhan Abu Saʿid (r. 1317–1335) now preserved in the Erzbischöfliches Dom- und Diozesan Museum in Vienna (Wardwell 1988–1989: figs. 14–18, 45).

Tent hangings of Mongol Eurasia are interwoven with nomadic notions of conspicuous consumption and display. Richly woven in brocades with a full range of decorative repertoires, a surviving group of textile hangings now in the collections of the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha (TE.40.2000) and the David Collection in Copenhagen (40/1997) (Figure 25.1), as well as other fragmentary pieces of woven furnishings, are important testimonials to the nomadic practices of the Eurasian steppes. Even though they eventually settled down in their conquered lands, the Ilkhanids were, for instance, accustomed to staying at seasonal encampments, roaming from the warmer regions in winter to the grassy plains in summer. The integral use of tent hangings for their dwellings is also self-evident in some aspects of the architectural idioms of Ilkhanid Iran, which show a decorative tendency to cover building surfaces with textile-like richly patterned stuccos, glazed tiles, and mural paintings. The painted interiors of two fourteenth-century monuments in Yazd, locally known as the Rukniyya and the Shamsiyya, particularly stand out for the richness of ornamentation (Kadoi 2005). The decorative composition found in the central medallion of the Rukniyya domed chamber (Figure 25.2) is reminiscent of the type of hand-printed patterned textile (*ghalamkar*) that is still widely manufactured in central Iran.

The circulation of luxurious woven products of Mongol Eurasian origin not only introduced new concepts of dress and color schemes to West Asia but also helped to disseminate – like design sketches on paper and pattern books – decorative vocabularies typical of the East Asian and Central Asian cultural domains to Persianate lands extending to Anatolia in the west and India in the east. As in the case of other types of portable objects, Chinese animal motifs derived from imported textiles, notably the dragon, were not merely duplicated but reconfigured through Iranian reinterpretations. Moreover, the Sinicizing modes of such mythical creatures eventually came to acquire a dual identity of sovereignty in Mongol-ruled East Asia and West Asia. On the other hand, the wide usage of chinoiserie motifs with a naturalistic bent, such as the lotus blossom and the cloud pattern, served to promote coherence with dynastic overtones across different media of the arts and crafts.

Ceramics, Miscellaneous Objects, and the Cycle of Chinoiserie

While the Mongol conquest of Eurasia brought economic chaos to the Islamic Middle East, this did not mean a total decline of the arts and crafts industries in the region. The reestablishment of a ceramic industry in West Asia, for instance,

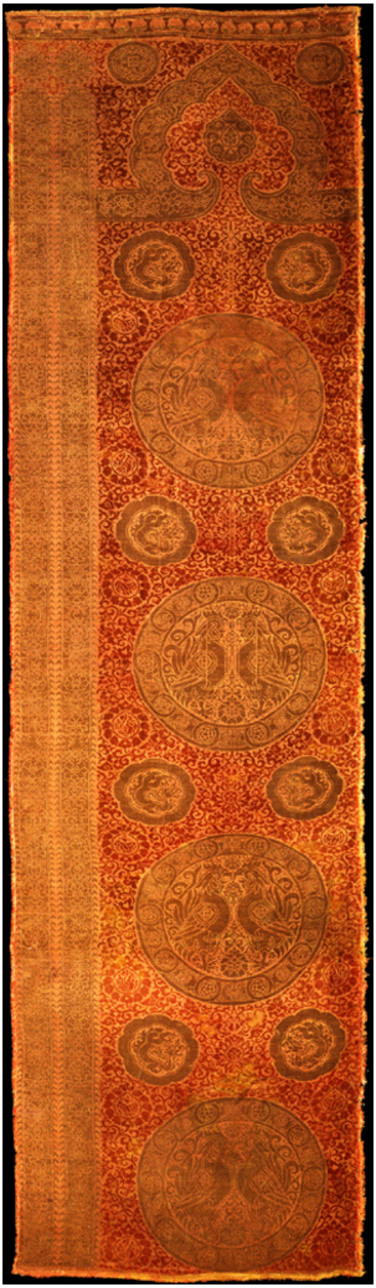

Figure 25.1 Hanging with roosters and dragons. Lampas weave. Mongol Eurasia, *c*. 1300. The David Collection, Copenhagen, 40/1997. Source: The David Collection, Copenhagen/Pernille Klemp. Reproduced with permission.

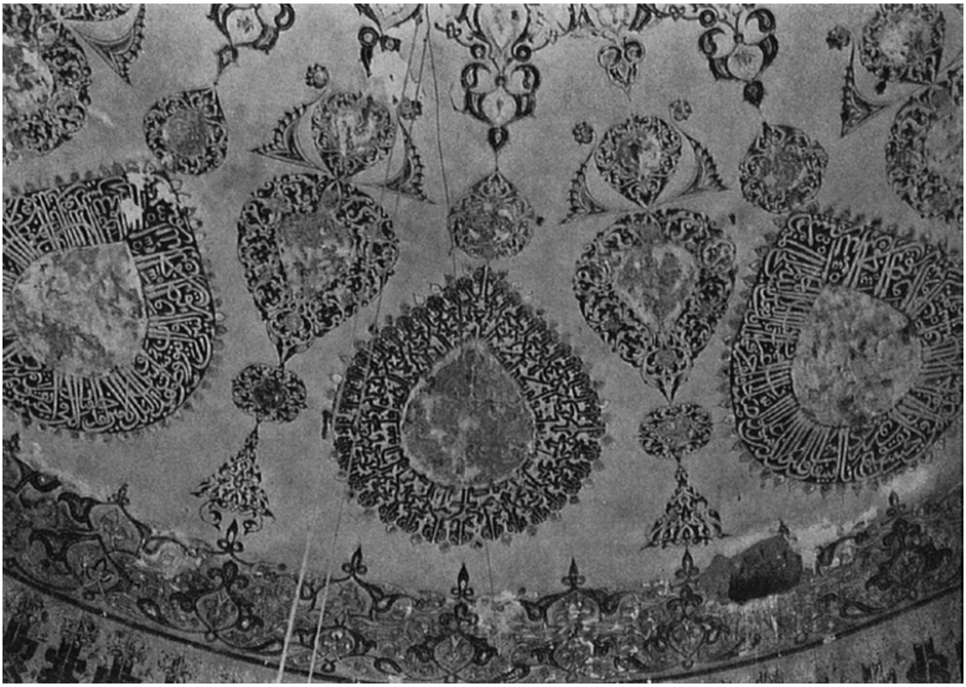

FIGURE 25.2 Mausoleum of Rukn al-Din (also known as the "Rukniyya"): interior painted decoration. Yazd, Iran, 1325. Source: © Yuka Kadoi. Reproduced with permission.

revived the notion of *al-Sin* (China) as a producer of quality pottery since ancient times. The beauty of Chinese ceramics continued to be appreciated in Ilkhanid Iran, especially porcelain that evoked an impeccable sense of whiteness, thinness, hardness, translucence, as well as rarity (owing to the unavailability in the Middle East of kaolin, an essential clay for the production of porcelain). The supply of Chinese ceramics in large quantities to the Middle Eastern market during the Mongol period is archaeologically demonstrated, especially by those fragments discovered in the major ports and riparian cities in the Gulf that constituted the Indian Ocean trade network, such as Old Hormuz and Kish (Kauz 2006; Morgan 1991). Besides meeting demand for table wares, Ilkhanid potters continuously sought technological and stylistic inspirations from faraway lands, and design-conscious clients in West Asia were tempted to possess ceramics in a Chinese guise, if not genuine, costly originals.

The deep blue glaze known as *lajvardina* (from Persian *lajvard*, or lapis lazuli), often characterized by the application of gold leaf, reproducing the blue and gold combinations favored in Ilkhanid textiles, is a technique that seems to have evolved independently in Ilkhanid workshops. However, a continuous fascination with Chinese ceramics in Mongol West Asia is particularly visible in the following two types of pottery (Kadoi 2009: 56–65). One is a type of pottery with apple-green glaze. Although its artificial body of fritware (made of ground quartz, glass frit, and a small amount of fine white clay) never satisfactorily recreated the refined texture of porcelain, the green coat of glaze, often accentuated by fish motifs, effectively hides the coarse surface of locally made dull clays so as to evoke a ceramic ware with a veneer of celadon from the Longquan kiln sites in southeast China (its height of production and export was in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries). Another type is the blue-and-white ware that became a benchmark of the global trade and consumption of Chinese ceramics in pre-modern times. In addition to the depiction of blue-and-white colored table wares in fourteenth-century manuscript painting, several blue-and-white wares produced in Iran are extant. These include the earliest dated (779 [1377]) blue-and-white plate in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (1970.28); surviving examples have been tentatively attributed to the Muzaffarid territories in southern Iran (Fars, Kirman and Kurdistan; 1314–1393). These two types of pottery, especially those of large size exported to the Middle East since the Mongol period, continued to stir Iranian admiration for Chinese porcelain later on under the Timurids (1370–1507) and Safavids (1501–1732), but also in the Ottoman Empire and beyond.

The growth of the Ilkhanid ceramic industry encompassed the production of richly glazed tiles. The interior and exterior of both religious and secular buildings in Ilkhanid Iran were lavishly decorated with tile revetments in a variety of shapes and designs. Examples from, or attributed to, the Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Sulayman, built around 1275 on a former Sasanian site in northwest Iran, clearly illustrate Chinese contributions to the reconfiguration of animal imagery in West Asia (Figure 25.3) (Masuya 2002: 84–103). Here, the Iranian mythical creature, the *simurgh*, which may have possibly functioned as part of the decorative ensemble to narrate episodes from the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) of Firdawsi (d. 1020), is transformed into a Chinese phoenix (*fenghuang*; the feminine counterpart to the dragon), with its long tail and sinuous body surrounded by floating clouds or the magical fungus (*lingzhi*), further Sinicized by a decorative border of lotus blossoms.

In addition to ceramics, Iranian metalwork underwent several stylistic revolutions in response to Chinese fashions. Although the degree of assimilation did not reach the level that it did in textiles and ceramics, the receptiveness of Ilkhanid metal makers to Chinese themes is equally evident in the application of Sinicized motifs, such as the phoenix, the dragon, *qilin*-like mythical creatures, and lotus-inspired floral patterns. A wide range of chinoiserie motifs are employed in several types of Ilkhanid metalwork, ranging from candlesticks to basins (Kadoi 2009: 74–100). The Mongol predilection for the color and texture of gold is also noticeable in a group of exquisite metal vessels and delicately crafted fashion accessories, notably belts and horse trappings, from the territories of the Golden Horde (1227–1502) in southern Russia, now in the collection of the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (Piotrovsky *et al.* 2000).

Compared with ceramics and metalwork, the interplay between objects is less visible in other types of portable craft items, such as woodwork, lacquerwork,

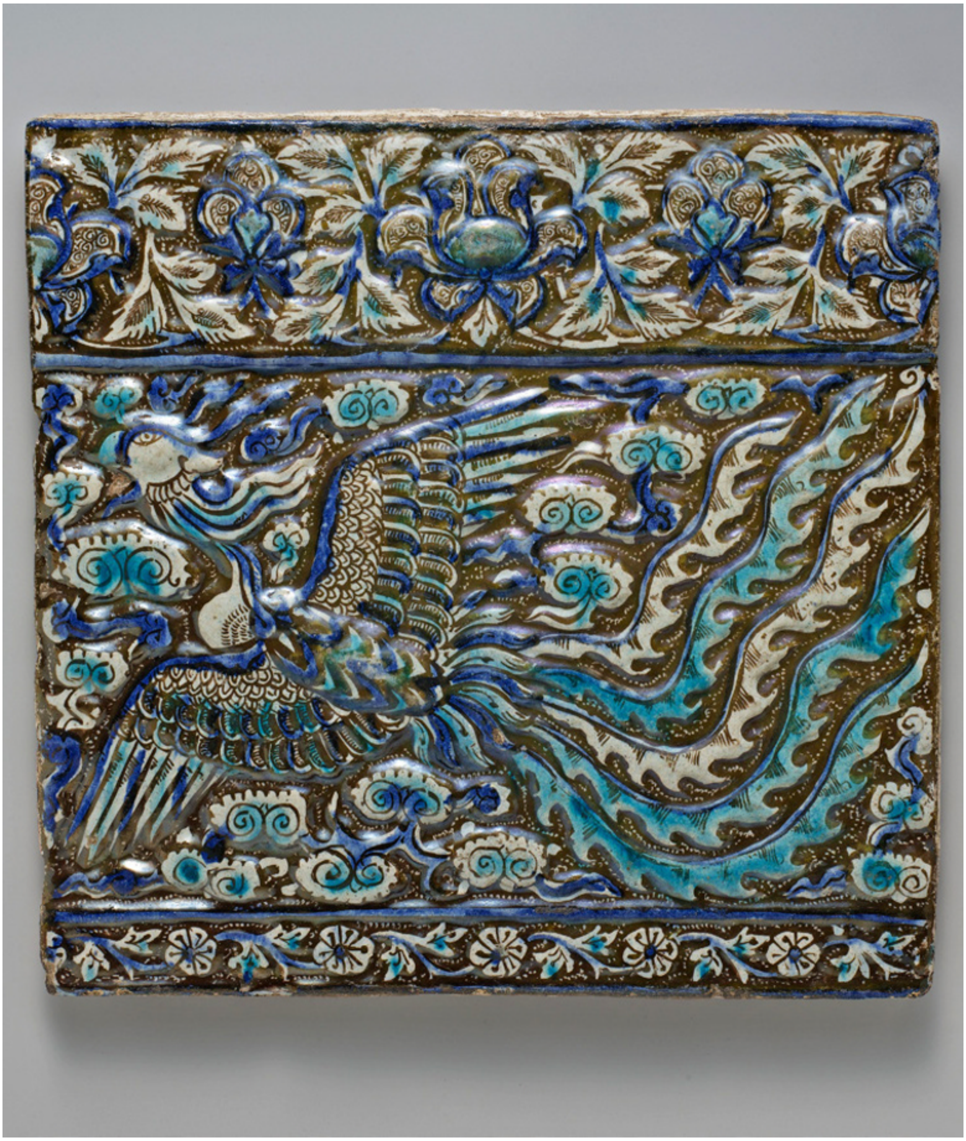

FIGURE 25.3 Frieze tile with a phoenix, clouds, and lotuses. Fritware, overglaze luster painting. Iran (probably Takht-i Sulayman), *c.* 1270s. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1912 (12.49.4). Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

carpets, and glasswork, so far as surviving examples are concerned. In the case of glassware, it is important to note that, since China was relatively slow to develop that industry, the traffic of exchange between East Asia and the Middle East in this medium was essentially westward, not eastward.

China and the Rise of Manuscript Painting in Iran

While manuscript paintings safely ascribed to pre-Mongol Iran are too scarce to provide a clear overview of the development of pictorial arts in West Asia up to 1300, the larger number of surviving illustrated manuscripts from the fourteenth century onward suggests an increase in both the quality and quantity of large-scale book production in the region. Various factors contributed to fostering the arts of the book in Ilkhanid Iran: above all, paper became widely available and affordable in West Asia under the Mongols, thanks to the commercial and cultural ties with East Asia; this enabled painters to work on large-size manuscripts with increased space for illustrations. Further inspired by the integral use of paper in East Asian society, block-printed paper money (*chao*) was experimentally introduced to Mongol Iran by the Ilkhan Gaykhatu (r. 1291–1295) in 1294; the experiment caused total economic chaos (Bloom 2001: 139–140).

The Ilkhanid boom in illustrated books was also due in part to the active patronage of Mongol rulers, who seem to have viewed certain manuscript genres as tools of cultural legitimacy, justifying their control over the heartland of Iranian civilization. The *Shahnama* was, for instance, widely copied and illustrated throughout the Mongol territories in Iran, indicating a certain degree of preference for this very Persianate literary work.[3] Among surviving Ilkhanid copies, the production of the so-called Great Mongol *Shahnama* (*c.* 1335) – one of the most elaborate and luxurious projects in the history of medieval Islamic illustrated manuscripts – appears to have been ideologically motivated. This is suggested by the choice of episodes that were illustrated with the possible intention of narrating and picturing the epic history of the Mongols through allegory (Grabar and Blair 1980: 13–27; Soudavar 1996). Indeed, the assimilation of Mongol dress and physiognomy into the illustrations of the "Iranian national epic" is particularly effective in portraying the Mongols as the legitimate successors of the ancient Persian kings (Figure 25.4) (Kadoi 2014).

Similarly, the writing of the *Jamiᶜ al-tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles) by the Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din (d. 1318) was carefully orchestrated (Blair 1995). He endowed a charitable complex in the capital Tabriz, called the Rabᶜ-i Rashidi, which included a book atelier (*kitabkhana*) (Blair 1984; Hoffmann 2013). His endowment deed (*waqfiyya*) (Hoffmann 2000) lists slaves (*ghulams*) among the staff of the atelier, including Turks, Greeks, Georgians, Indians, Ethiopians, Slavs, Armenians, and others, one of them identified as a Turkish painter (*naqqash*) (Blair 1995: 40). It has been suggested that non-Iranian artists – notably Turkic Uighur muralists and painters, whose pictorial style was still informed by ancient Central Asian Buddhist and Manichaean traditions – were among the multiethnic staff of the Ilkhanid ateliers in Tabriz and elsewhere (Arnold 1924). Their contributions must have played a key role in the formative period of what is now called "Persian" painting (Gray 1961).

This conventional label – "Persian" painting – was invented at the turn of the twentieth century when Islamic artistic styles were typically given such ethno-national labels as Arab, Persian, Turkish, and Indian (Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu 2007), and

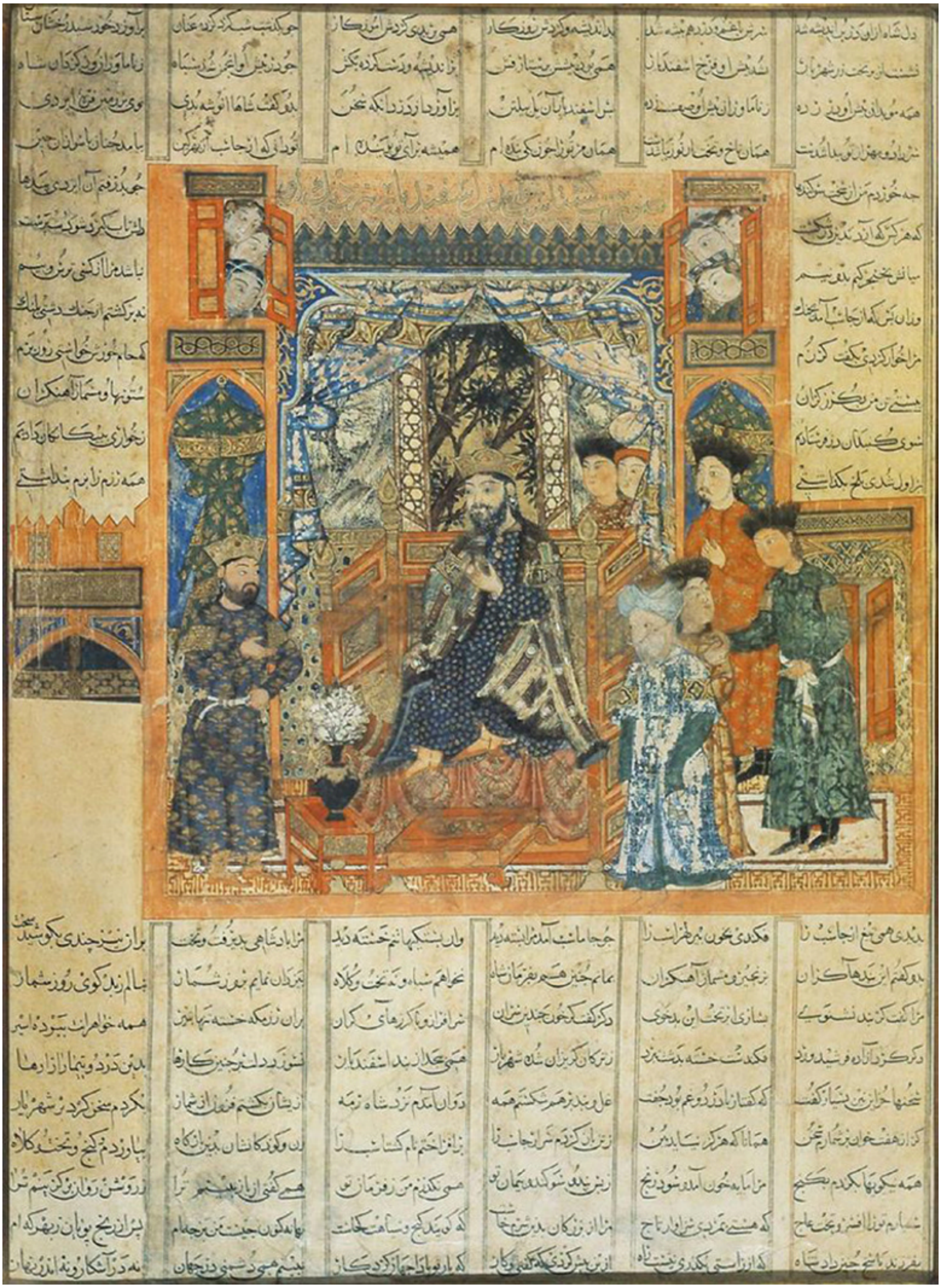

FIGURE 25.4 Isfandiyar approaching Gushtasp, page from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*. Iran (probably Tabriz), 1330s. Berenson Collection, Villa I Tatti, Florence. Reproduced with permission of the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

it was often combined with yet another contentious adjective, "classical" (predominantly referring to the Timurid and Safavid periods), so as to form a canonical hierarchy within the history of "Persian" painting (Gruber 2012). It may, however, be better modified as "Persianate" painting, given its international deployment throughout the post-Mongol eastern Islamic lands well into the modern era.

To return to Ilkhanid manuscript painting, the two-dimensional decorative tendency in the pictorial traditions of pre-Mongol West Asia (or so-called Arab painting that flourished in Abbasid Baghdad) (Contadini 2010; Ettinghausen 1962; Grabar 2007; see Tabbaa and Contadini, CHAPTER 12 and CHAPTER 17) gave way to a more naturalistic three-dimensional approach with the adoption of Chinese compositional and spatial ideas (Kadoi 2009: 123–236). Judging by the examples of early Ilkhanid painted manuscripts, such as the *Manafiʿ-i Hayavan* (Benefits of Animals) of Ibn Bakhtishuʿ (Maragha, *c.* 1297 or 1299; M.500, the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; Hillenbrand 1990) and the *ʿAjaʾib al-Makhluqat* (Wonders of Creation) of al-Qazwini (probably Mosul, *c.* 1295–1302; Or. 14140, British Library, London; Carboni 2015), the sense of depth began to be suggested by the subtle arrangement of landscape elements (e.g., trees, grass, plants, and clouds). Some images found in the illustrations of early Ilkhanid manuscripts are thus more carefully structured, marked by attempts to experiment with several spatial effects, such as spatial continuity, horizontality, and verticality. These advanced pictorial techniques, which had been absent in pre-Mongol Islamicate visual cultures, appear to have stemmed from Chinese sources, ranging from hanging-scroll and hand-scroll paintings to other types of illustrative materials, such as woodblock-printed books and maps.

The adoption and adaptation of Chinese-inspired pictorial techniques are particularly discernible in illustrated manuscripts attributed to northwest Iran, where the Ilkhanid capital Tabriz was located. Along with Sultaniyya and Baghdad, Tabriz became a metropolis with a cosmopolitan ambience, thanks to its role as an entrepôt on an international trade route connecting Asia and Europe (Preiser-Kapeller 2013). This is in marked contrast with illustrated manuscripts from provincial workshops, for example, those attributed to Inju-ruled Shiraz that retained many pre-Mongol pictorial features (Wright 2013).

Multireligious Ingredients in the Pictorial Arts of Ilkhanid Iran

Despite the fact that the Mongols were ultimately pagan destroyers in the eyes of the Muslims and others, they contributed to the rejuvenation of visual and material cultures in West Asia as they settled down on Iranian soil and later converted to Islam. Their conversion, proclaimed by Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304) and supported by Mongol officials, was, however, more likely to be a political gesture in order to assimilate themselves into a Muslim-majority Iranian context. The exception was the Ilkhan Tegüder (r. 1282–1284), who was baptized as a Nestorian Christian but later embraced Islam.

Although Islam may have remained alien to the Mongols, who were religiously eclectic and ecumenical, they nonetheless patronized Islamic religious art and architecture (Blair 2002; Wilber 1955). A sense of grandeur is embodied in the monumental remains of Ilkhanid mosques, shrines, and funerary complexes (generally consisting of a tomb, a mosque, a madrasa, and other buildings) with their distinctive onion-shaped double-shell domes and, in several instances, their unprecedented grandiose scale. One celebrated example is the mausoleum of Sultan Uljaytu (r. 1304–1316; who converted to Shiʿism in 1310) in his new capital, Sultaniyya, whose name means "Imperial" (see O'Kane, CHAPTER 23). This is an awe-inspiring octagonal structure, some 125 feet in height, crowned by a massive dome, more than 80 feet in diameter (Blair 1986); the elaborate polychrome stucco decoration in the roof of the gallery shows clear affinities with contemporary manuscript illumination, hinting at a design aesthetic that would become canonized later under the Timurids.

Like the use of chinoiserie motifs in secular contexts, Chinese themes became an integral part even of Ilkhanid religious arts. While there is no obvious trace of a Chinese contribution to Islamic calligraphic traditions in terms of writing style and tools, some illuminated pages of Qurʾan manuscripts produced in fourteenth-century Iran – for example, those commissioned by Uljaytu – betray a certain Sinicizing flavor in their illuminations (Chaigne 2012; Kadoi 2009: 223–228). Various Chinese themes, including lotus blossoms, a cloud collar, and imbricated water patterns, occur not only in the headings and borders of the illuminated pages but also as a background decoration of Qurʾanic inscriptions. Although Ilkhanid Qurʾan illuminations are essentially nonfigurative, thus devoid of animal themes, it is remarkable that this conservative form of Islamic devotional art also came under the spell of China. Yet Chinese-looking animal themes are combined, often in an iconographically mismatched manner, with Qurʾanic inscriptions in a few surviving examples of Ilkhanid tile revetments (e.g., Komaroff and Carboni 2002: no. 113), thereby indicating the atmosphere of religio-cultural openness within the Mongol realms in Iran and beyond.

While Islam is one of its predominant ingredients, the artistic tradition of Mongol Iran was also imbued, in an eclectic manner, with non-Islamic religious themes. Ilkhanid painters were particularly susceptible to Christian pictorial sources, especially those derived from Byzantine and Syriac conventions (Allen 1985; Fiey 1975), but they also actively looked toward the East in search of iconographic and stylistic inspiration. Apart from the lotus (a key component of Buddhist iconography, as a symbol of rebirth, purity, and the Buddha) and the *çintamani* (a tripartite jewel that can fulfill desires to acquire material and spiritual wealth), many iconographic elements of Buddhist derivation, notably those which came from Tibetan Buddhism, made a significant contribution to the enhancement of figural imagery in Ilkhanid manuscript painting. This is particularly evident in the postures and gestures of characters in narrative paintings (Figure 25.4), resembling those depicted in Tibetan *thangka*s, and in the assimilation of East Asian facial and sartorial features (Kadoi 2014). The indelible

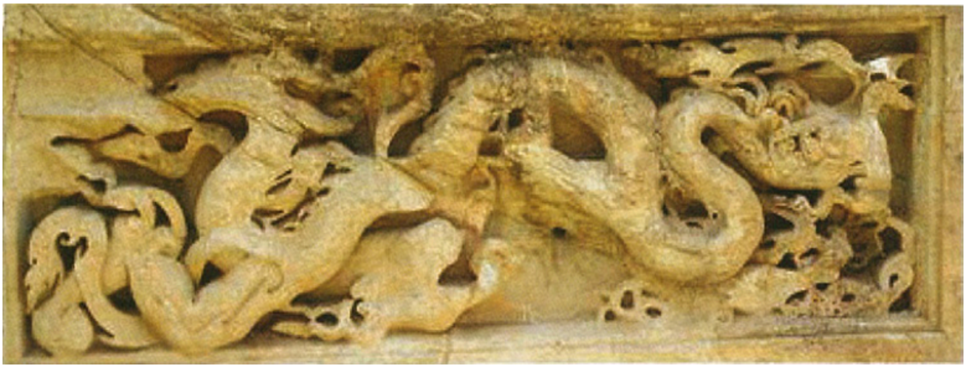

Figure 25.5 Rock-carved dragon. From a former Buddhist site near Viar, Iran, late thirteenth century. Source: Alireza Anisi. Reproduced with permission.

Buddhist flavor permeating various aspects of the arts of Mongol Iran is not surprising, given that the Ilkhanid Mongols – intrinsically "shamanistic" but in favor of multireligious orientations – actively patronized Buddhism and invited Buddhist monks, mainly from Tibetan Lamaist sects, to the Ilkhanid court, especially under Arghun Khan (r. 1284–1291).

An unequivocal proof of the tenacity of Buddhism in Ilkhanid Iran is a rock complex at Viar near Sultaniyya, preserving life-like, stone-sculptured dragons next to a non-oriented mihrab and other semicircular niches (Figure 25.5). Some iconographic features of the dragons, for example, their well-proportioned serpentine bodies accompanied by exhaling flames or clouds, are visibly East Asian in appearance and differ in many ways from their Islamic counterpart that tends to be portrayed as a legless snake-like creature. The survival of the Viar dragons testifies, once again, to the multireligious environment of open-mindedness (or indifference) in Ilkhanid territory. Even after the official conversion to Islam in 1295, some Buddhist sculptural monuments evaded destruction and iconoclasm and have survived in Iran until today.

Multiethnic, multireligious, and integrated into global networks of various kinds, Iran was at the crossroads of pan-Asian civilizations under the aegis of the Mongols. The Mongol invasion of Eurasia brought a transcultural dimension to the visual and material cultures of Islamic West Asia by absorbing elements of disparate cultural and religious origin. Encompassing nomadic Mongol, Chinese, Central Asian, and Iranian elements that were fused into a distinctive visual language, the arts of the Mongol–Ilkhanid courts constituted one of the principal artistic grammars of Islamic visual cultures throughout late medieval and early modern times in the eastern Islamic lands.

Compared with relatively well-researched Ilkhanid Iran, the broader ramifications of Mongol culture in post-Seljuq Anatolia (incorporated into the Mongol territories after the Battle of Kösedağ in 1243) still remain to be explored.

New studies are beginning to open a new window onto the Western horizons of the *Pax Mongolica* (e.g., Beyazıt 2012; Pfeiffer and Quinn 2006), without which the emergence of Turkmen principalities that were eventually subsumed under the Ottoman Empire can hardly be understood. Another promising field for future scholarship is the study of artistic innovations under the Jalayirids (*c.* 1340–1432), who succeeded the Ilkhanids, with their capitals in Tabriz and Baghdad (O'Kane 2003). It was this dynasty that laid the foundations for the Timurid–Turkmen arts of Iran and Central Asia, which would flourish in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Artistic exchanges between the Mongol Empire and Byzantium, the Cilician kingdom of Armenia, Georgia, the Crusader states of the Levant, and their European extensions constitute yet other underexplored subjects of inquiry (e.g., Arnold 1999; Kouymjian 2006).

The interactions with Chinese visual culture in Mongol Eurasia differ significantly from the Sinicizing mode that emerged in European decorative arts during the eighteenth century. European chinoiserie – based on a notion of how China ought to be placed within the narrow confines of a Eurocentric cultural psyche – was essentially a one-way movement exemplifying an asymmetrical, dichotomized East–West relationship. By contrast, the Iranian reaction to the arts and culture of China, or more broadly East Asia, during the Mongol–Ilkhanid period provides parameters that are fundamental for understanding a unique, nearly borderless state of multidirectional civilizational encounters throughout the Eurasian continent.

Notes

1 Modern scholarship in the Mongol Empire emerged from the late nineteenth century as a branch of Central Asian history. Pioneers of this field included Wilhelm (Vasiliĭ) von Barthold (1869–1930), a Russian scholar who was, in the words of Vladimir Fed'orovich Minorsky (1877–1966), "not an 'Oriental philologist' making inroads into history, but a 'historian' equipped with Oriental languages" (quoted in Bregel 1988: 830). Despite its seemingly unmanageable dimensions, both geographically and linguistically, the study of the Mongol Empire became one of the established interdisciplinary subjects and has steadily grown in recent years. See Biran 2013 for the current state of this field.

2 Besides numerous publications, both popular and scholarly, the Mongol Empire remains one of the most favored exhibition themes. Apart from the hitherto unexplored art history of Chaghatai khanate (1227–1363), the artistic legacy of each khanate (Ilkhanate; Golden Horde, and Yuan China) has been often featured in special exhibitions across the globe (e.g., Komaroff and Carboni 2002; Piotrovsky *et al.* 2000; Taipei 2001).

3 See the digitizing project of the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi at Cambridge University (http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/page (accessed 2 February 2017)); its online database, which starts from the Mongol period, offers a nearly comprehensive overview of the surviving pages of the "Book of Kings" found in worldwide locations. See also two volumes in the series of *Shahnama Studies* (Melville 2011; Melville and van den Berg 2012).

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25

Chinese and Turko-Mongol Elements in Ilkhanid and Timurid Arts

Part 2: Timurids, Central Asia, and Ming China (1370–1507)

Tomoko Masuya

The Timurid dynasty emerged out of the break up of the Mongol Empire, which included the collapse of the Ilkhanate of Iran around 1353. The Timurid Empire was established in 1370 when Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic soldier of the Chaghatai *ulus* (khanate) of the Great Mongol Empire, conquered Transoxiana (Central Asia). Until 1507 the Timurid rulers continued to reign over the Turkic–Mongol and Iranian societies in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Iran. While the Timurids admired the sophisticated Persianate culture of their conquered territory, they also upheld their Turkic and Mongol traditions as members of the Mongol Chinggisid family. Lacking Chinggisid descent, Timur (r. 1370–1405) married a Mongol princess, took the title of *küregen* ("son-in-law" in Mongolian) of the Chinggisid family, and ruled as an *amir* (commander) rather than as *khan* (emperor). The third Timurid ruler, Shahrukh (r. 1409–1447), clearly also viewed himself as a successor to Mongol history as he ordered the historian Hafiz-i Abru (d. 1430) to copy the Mongol vizier Rashid al-Din's *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles), written in Iran a century earlier, and to update its pages. The Timurid rulers' celebration of their Turko-Mongol roots is also the reason that Central Asiatic elements can be observed in Timurid paintings and crafts.

The extent and nature of Turkic and Chinese contributions to Timurid art have been among the major issues in modern scholarship. In studies predating

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the 1970s, seemingly "foreign" elements were simply labeled as Turkic or Chinese, but further evaluation of context and comparison with likely originals were neglected. Since the colloquy on the albums of the Topkapı Palace Museum (Grube and Sims 1980), the exhibition of Timurid art in Washington DC and Los Angeles (Lentz and Lowry 1989), and the supplement issue of *Muqarnas* on Timurid art and culture (Golombek and Subtelny 1992), detailed examinations of Chinese subject matters and design motifs in Timurid art, complemented by studies of the Timurid context for their usage and assimilation, have been undertaken. Scholars from East Asia with knowledge of Chinese art and history have joined in these endeavors to expand the scope of the inquiry.

The sources offer abundant evidence for these contacts with China. During his reign, Timur sent envoys to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) nine times. His first envoy arrived in China as early as in 1387, soon after his conquest of eastern Iran. His successors continued to send embassies to China as overlords of Central Asia and Iran, and maintained a close diplomatic relationship by regularly exchanging official missions. Not only the rulers but also Timurid princes and governors of provinces sent delegations to China, sometimes forming joint missions among themselves. Before the final mission departed from Samarqand in 1504, more than 70 envoys were sent to China (Zhang Wende 2006: 266–274).

Official delegations from other Islamic dynasties to the Ming court are also well recorded in Chinese historical sources. The Mamluks in Egypt (1250–1517) sent at least two envoys during the first half of the fifteenth century; the Sharifs of Mecca and the Rasulids of Yemen (1229–1454) also dispatched ambassadors in response to official Ming maritime expeditions ordered by Emperor Yongle (r. 1402–1424). These expeditions to the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa were led by the Muslim eunuch Zheng He (1371–1434) to establish long-distance trade and expand Chinese hegemony. Envoys from the governors of Isfahan and Shiraz in the territory of the Aqqoyunlu Turkmens (1378–1508) of West and Central Iran under Yaʿqub Beg's reign (1478–1490) arrived in 1483 and paid a joint tribute of two lions (*Ming shi* 1974: 28:8450–8451 [*juan* 326], 28:8600–8624 [*juan* 332]).

Timur's offerings for the first Ming ruler Emperor Hongwu (r. 1368–1398) were 15 horses and 2 camels; Hongwu rewarded Timur with 18 ingots of platinum. The Timurids usually brought Western horses, which were highly valued as mounts in China, as well as animals uncommon in China such as camels, leopards, lions, ostriches, and parrots. Other gifts included precious stones and artifacts, including carpets and swords. In return, the Chinese gave letters with official seals, paper money, robes, silk fabrics, and porcelains (Kauz 2011).

In addition, there is evidence of much inland and maritime trade between the Timurid territory and China. Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo, the ambassador of Henry III of Castile to the court of Timur in 1404–1405, reported that Chinese merchandise such as pearls, precious stones, silk, musk, and rhubarb were brought to Sultaniyya and Samarqand (Clavijo 2009: 94, 171). According to Fei Xin, a participant in Zheng He's voyages, the Port of Hormuz dealt with imported merchandise such as blue-and-white porcelains, silk, aucklandia root, and pepper. Among these items, porcelains and silk were probably brought from China (Fei Xin 1996: 71).

Even though its relationship with China was not as strong as during the previous Ilkhanid period, the Timurid court maintained direct contact with its Ming counterpart and exchanged gifts of crafts. Chinese crafts were highly valued in the Timurid territories, where artists and craftsmen studied the Chinese designs. These designs were used at times by local workshops to emulate Chinese art, and at other times, they were added to existing Persianate motifs to enrich traditional decorative repertoires.

Manuscripts and Paintings

Timur's mother tongue, Chaghatai (Eastern Turkic), was spoken throughout the empire and Turkic prose and poetry flourished during the Timurid period. As in the Mongol courts, Turkic bureaucratic scribes called *bakhshi* (originally meaning "Buddhist priest" in Uighur) served the Timurid rulers and princes with their knowledge of the Chaghatai language and expertise in Uighur calligraphy, which was often used in rendering texts and in official correspondence. The most celebrated writer in this language was ʿAli-Shir Navaʾi (1441–1501), the Turkic politician and literatus who served Sultan Husayn Bayqara's (r. 1470–1506) court in Herat, to which the Timurid capital had been moved from Samarqand after Timur's death in 1405. The widespread popularity of certain texts encouraged the production of manuscripts in Chaghatai Turkic, written in Uighur script, throughout the Timurid period, alongside texts in Persian (Arabic being largely confined to religious and scientific works).

The most famous illustrated Chaghatai Turkic manuscript in Uighur script is the undated *Miʿrajnama* (Book of Ascension) (Bibliothèque nationale de France, supplément turc 190). It is a translation of *Nahj al-faradis* (Pathway to Paradise) by al-Saraʾi. The original literary manuscript in Khwarazmian Turkic is datable to *c.* 1357–1360 and describes the Prophet Muhammad's miraculous night journey to Jerusalem, the Seven Heavens, Paradise, and Hell (Gruber 2008: 283–299). The *Miʿrajnama* is bound together with another Chaghatai Turkic translation of a Persian work transcribed by Malik Bakhshi in 1436, which may also be a good approximation for the *Miʿrajnama* in terms of its Persianate painting style.

The *Miʿrajnama* paintings have often been associated with Central Asian Buddhist paintings because of the Uighur script and the depiction of figures (multiheaded angels and guards of Hell) that do not otherwise appear in Persianate iconography. However, none of the images is an exact match for those found in Buddhist iconography, and the painting style is that of the Timurid court of Herat characterized by bright, contrasting colors, abundant use of gold, and detailed brushwork. The text was transcribed by a *bakhshi*, and the paintings are consistent with the established Persianate depiction of angelic and demonic figures that can be observed elsewhere, such as a manuscript of the *Kitab al-bulhan* (Book of Wonders) produced in the late fourteenth-century court of the Jalayirids, a Mongol dynasty that succeeded the Ilkhans in Iran and Iraq (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Or. 133). Thus the *Miʿrajnama* paintings appear to be the work of Persian painters (Masuya 2007). Christiane J. Gruber has suggested that Persian painters like Ghiyath al-Din (see below) who were familiar with Chinese Buddhist art formulated the images (Gruber 2008: 177–182). Furthermore, an introduction to a manuscript of *Nahj al-faradis* copied for the seventh Timurid ruler Abu Saʿid (r. 1451–1469) sheds a new light on this subject (Sims 2014).

Compare, for example, the Siyah Qalam paintings, which are painted neither in the Persianate nor in the Chinese style (Figure 25.6). This series of paintings attributed to Muhammad Siyah Qalam (the Black Pen) can be found in two albums preserved in the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul (Hazine 2153 and 2160), generally believed to have been compiled at the court of the Aqqoyunlu Turkmen ruler, Yaʿqub Beg, in Tabriz, but recently the assembling of both albums has been attributed to the Ottoman court in Istanbul, under Sultan Selim I (*c.* 1514) (Necipoğlu forthcoming). Although there are hints of both Persianate and Sinicizing styles, the Siyah Qalam paintings have been a puzzle for art historians as regards to date, location, ethnic background of the painter(s), and context of the paintings (various articles in Grube and Sims 1980; Roxburgh 2005b: 146–189). They are painted with limited palettes mostly of black, brown, red, blue, and white, but also with gold, on peculiar coarse unpolished paper of varying dimensions. Some of the sheets show vestiges of having been joined together, which suggests that they may have originally constituted hand scrolls or paintings of very large formats. They have no text but bear figures of nomads, dervishes, animals, and demons, all with distinctive wrinkled faces and dressed in simple costumes. The unusual subject matter – non-princely, vulgar figures – and the depiction of unusual costumes, musical instruments, and other objects, have led scholars to hypothesize a Central Asiatic, specifically Turkic, background. Currently, two theories exist regarding their provenance: one, that they were produced in Timurid Central Asia in the late fourteenth or first half of the fifteenth century; two, that they are from the latter half of the fifteenth century and were produced in the Aqqoyunlu Turkmen court in west Iran. However, neither theory is conclusive, and a new approach is required to solve this mystery.

The origin of other paintings in these two Topkapı Palace albums is more certain. A number of Chinese paintings from the Ming period are preserved in them and in another album (Hazine 2154), which was compiled in Safavid Iran by the court calligrapher Dost Muhammad in 1544–1545 for Prince Bahram Mirza (1517–1549) as well as the so-called Diez Albums in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin that comprise specimens largely removed from the Topkapı albums (Gonnella *et al.* 2016). Many of these Chinese paintings are executed on silk, as

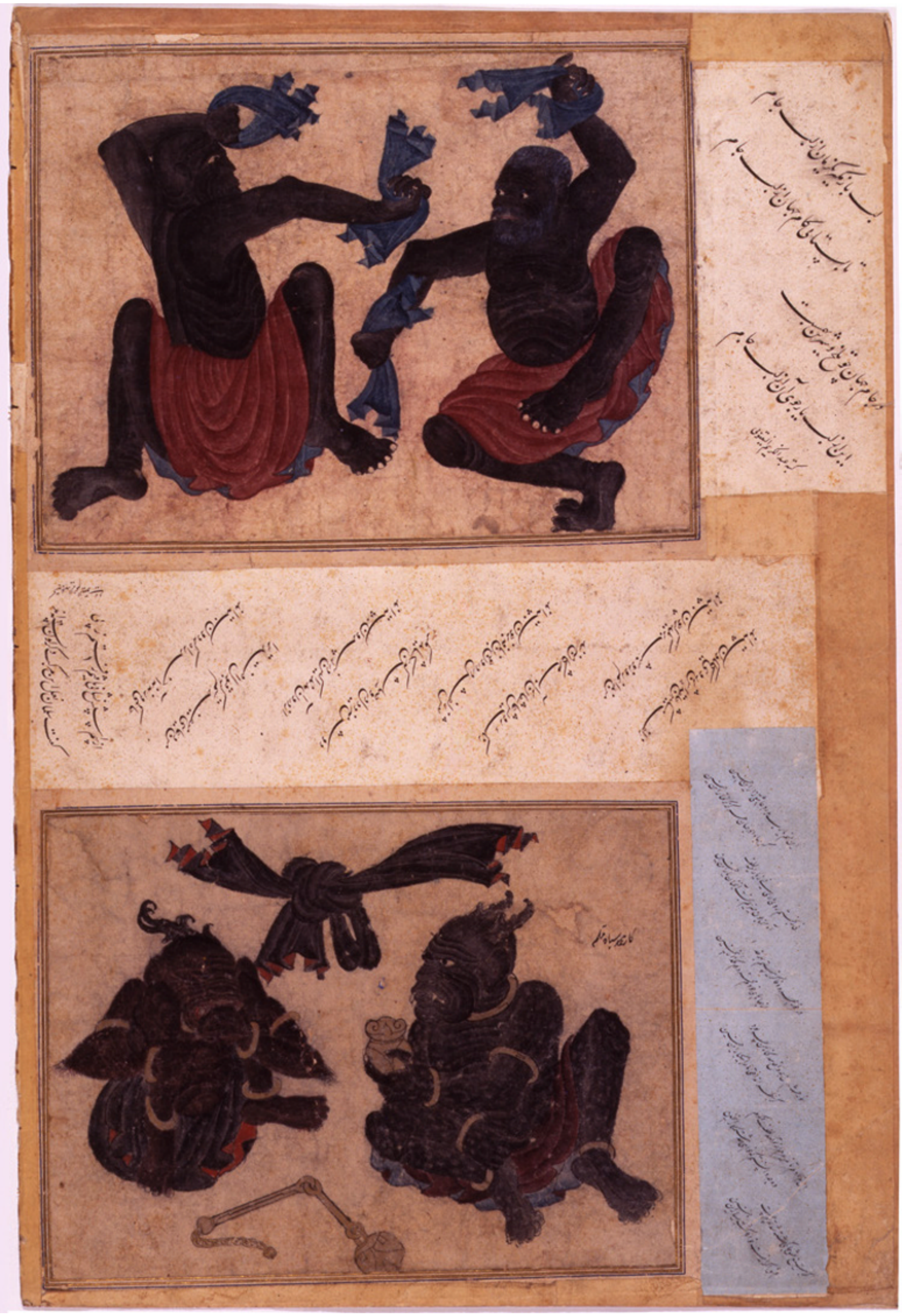

Figure 25.6 “Two dancing dervishes” and “Two seated demons,” attributed to Muhammad Siyah Qalam, Album paintings, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Hazine 2153, f. 34b. Source: Topkapı Palace Museum. Reproduced with permission.

is customary in China, and all of them have been cropped to fit the album format, since Chinese paintings are usually in larger formats of hanging or hand scrolls (Roxburgh 2005a: 295). The majority is painted in distinct colors with bird-and flower themes; there are also a certain number of Buddhist and Daoist religious images, court scenes, and portraits (Sugimura 1986). Complemented by some Western European and Europeanized images, the Chinese paintings are notably outnumbered by copies made by fifteenth-century Persianate court artists.

But how did the original Chinese works reach Iran or Central Asia? It is known that special gifts from the Ming emperors to the Timurids included paintings of the very horses given by the Timurids (Kauz 2011: 117; *Ming shi* 1974: 28:8599 [*juan* 332]; Roxburgh 2005a: 160) and some paintings in the Topkapı Palace albums are variations on this theme (Figure 25.7). It is possible that gifts from China made their way into the albums, but this cannot be the only explanation, as most of these works are below the artistic level of the imperial standard. Pure ink paintings and landscape paintings from the Chinese court's imperial collections are not to be found in the Topkapı Palace albums. Since paintings were popular articles for export from China to countries in East Asia during this period (Inabata 2010: 29–33), the Ming paintings mounted in these albums may have been acquired by the Timurids through trade.

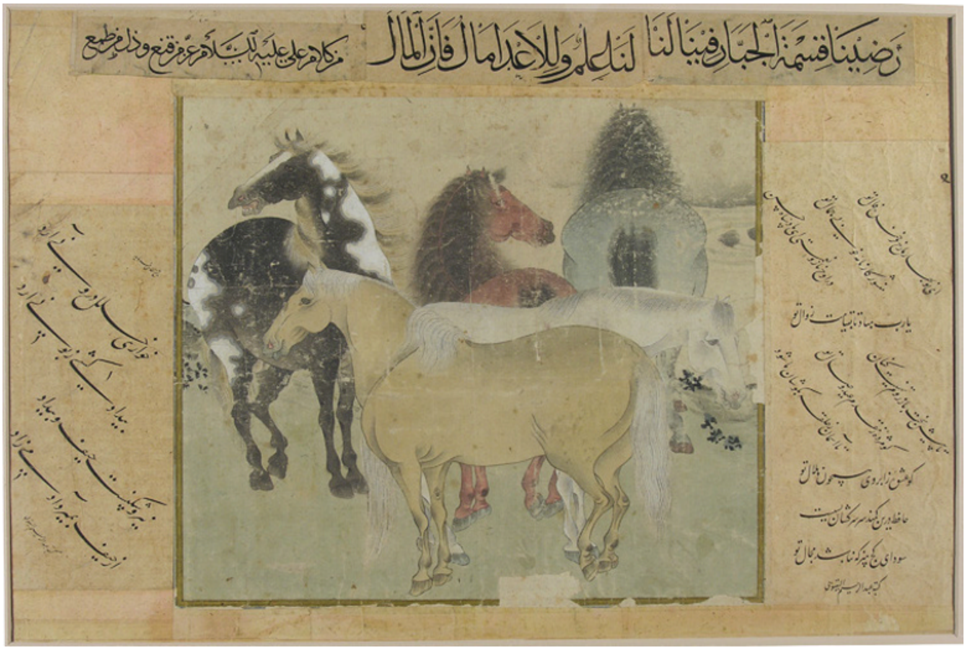
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Figure 25.7 "Five horses," Chinese painting on silk, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Hazine 2153, f. 151a. Source: Topkapı Palace Museum. Reproduced with permission.

It should also be noted that one of the Timurid delegations to the Chinese court in Beijing included Ghiyath al-Din *naqqash* (the painter). He was dispatched in December 1419 to China by Prince Baysunghur (d. 1433), Timur's grandson and governor of Herat, and returned home in August 1422. Although his art is not known today, he left a travelogue as a report to his master. Among his descriptions of the Chinese art and architecture he saw during his trip are Buddhist sculptures and paintings (Roxburgh 2010; Thackston 2001: 53–67). In spite of the heathen nature of the art, he was amazed by the gigantic scale of the statues and admired the delicacy of facial expressions on the smaller statues and the masterful brush of paintings. Having come into direct contact with contemporary Chinese art, artists like Ghiyath al-Din may have brought back some Chinese paintings to Iran. Although the painter does not say so explicitly, he may have been given a special arts mission by Baysunghur, a well-known patron of the arts, which may have precipitated his dispatch to Beijing.

Fifteenth-century painters in Iran and Central Asia used Chinese paintings as models and worked on reproductions and studies. Among the studies preserved in the Topkapı Palace albums are those attributed to Shaykhi, a painter at the court of the Aqqoyunlu ruler Yaʿqub Beg. They are either close copies of Chinese models or creative interpretations that combine Chinese elements of animals, plants, and figures. David J. Roxburgh notes that these studies by Persian painters "had the result of assimilating the 'foreign' works, bringing them closer to the Persian tradition" (Roxburgh 2005a: 295). Indeed, it seems likely that the Timurids imported Chinese paintings to obtain models for the *kitabkhana* (royal scriptorium-workshops for manuscripts and allied media), so that the court painters and designers could incorporate specific details in their own works, rather than collecting them for artistic appreciation as rulers of East Asia did (Tokugawa Art Museum 2008). If the steep mountains and vast rivers in monochrome ink landscape paintings were not deemed suitable backgrounds for narrative illustrations in Persian manuscripts, this may be one reason why this genre of Chinese painting cannot be found in the albums. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the court painter-designers were also employed in painting murals and in preparing designs for application to multiple media.

Kitabkhana Designs

A progress report (*ʿarzadasht*) that was likely petitioned by Jaʿfar Tabrizi, the head of the *kitabkhana* in Herat, to his patron Prince Baysunghur, is pasted in the Topkapı album Hazine 2153 (folio 98a). This document shows that the artists provided designs for textiles, daily objects, harnesses, tents, and architectural decoration, as well as preparing manuscripts (copying, illustrating, illuminating, and binding) (Thackston 2001: 43–46). Sketches and drawings of such designs are collected in three Topkapı Palace albums (Hazine 2152, 2153, 2160) and the

"Diez Albums" in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 158–237; Roxburgh 2005a: 84–147; Gonnella *et al.* 2016).

These monochrome or tinted designs are different from the studies of Chinese paintings in the Topkapı albums Hazine 2153 and 2160, since they are generally unfinished. Demonstrating a high level of draftsmanship, most of the designs include Chinese motifs, such as mythical animals (dragon, phoenix, and *qilin*) and auspicious symbols (heron, crane, deer, tortoise, lion, peony, lotus, and gold cloud). Nevertheless, they are not direct copies of Chinese models but have been transformed into Sinicizing motifs and designs fully assimilated and rearranged within the Persianate Timurid repertoire (Crowe 1992: 171). The usual combinations of motifs observed in Chinese art are not found, some popular motifs such as bats and peaches are omitted altogether, and those that are adopted have often lost their original Chinese significance. Perhaps vaguely preserving some of their connotations as good omens or imperial emblems, these well-integrated designs of quasi-Chinese motifs were meant to be used in various courtly objects. The shapes of several album designs indicate that they were intended for manuscript illumination, or other media such as textiles and leather.

The designs of mural paintings were also provided by the *kitabkhana* and probably painted by its staff of painter-designers in some cases. In spite of the literary evidence that landscape paintings existed on the walls of Timurid palaces (Stchoukine 1954: 1–28), none of these has survived. In manuscript paintings from the same time period, the mural paintings of palatial buildings are shown to depict trees growing among rocks, or scenes with human figures, birds, and Chinese mythical animals among trees; in each case the paintings are entirely in monochrome cobalt-blue, as in the paintings from the manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa* (Quintet), dated to 1431 (State Hermitage Museum, VP-1000). Thomas W. Lentz points out that they "clearly mimic the linear monochrome style of Chinese ink painting and ceramic decoration, […] render[ing] even specifically Islamic subject matter in a 'Chinese' guise" (Lentz 1993: 255). Since the landscapes lack the mountains and rivers that are essential motifs for Chinese landscape painting, and because cobalt-blue ink was used instead of black, it can be inferred that the *kitabkhana* artists created the mural designs not by looking at Chinese landscape paintings but rather by handling blue-and-white Chinese porcelains.

Papermaking and Decoration

Even as late as the fifteenth century, Chinese paper was still greatly appreciated by Islamic calligraphers for its fine quality and exquisite decoration, despite the fact that centuries had passed since papermaking was first introduced to West Asia. The composition of Chinese paper (mainly hemp and bamboo fibers) offered calligraphers a soft texture for writing, whereas Islamic paper was made from the fiber of linen rags. Further, the paper was often beautifully decorated through dyeing, marbling, the addition of speckled gold and silver flakes, prints, stenciling, and painting in gold, silver, and other colors.

It is known that the Timurids imported paper from China and used decorated paper for manuscripts as early as in 1437, the date of the *Kulliyat* (Collection of Works) by Saʿdi in the Bodleian Library (Pers. E. 26) (Roxburgh 2005a: 161–165). Turkmen rulers also obtained Chinese paper, which has been deployed in a manuscript of the *Makhzan al-asrar* (Treasury of Mysteries) by Haydar Khwarazmi, dated to 1478 (New York Public Library, Persian Ms. 41) (Figure 25.8) and prepared for Yaʿqub Beg (Soucek 1988: 13ff.).

Timurid and Turkmen craftsmen studied Chinese paper decoration and soon established their own styles of margin decoration and marbling. During the fifteenth century, these craftsmen developed techniques of paper decoration with gold-speckling and margin paintings to be used as mounts for calligraphic specimens, single paintings in albums, and manuscripts (Bloom 2001: 72; Roxburgh 2005a: 171–179). This art form flourished in the ensuing Safavid period and was adopted in the court workshops of the neighboring Ottoman, Mughal, and Uzbek (Shaybanid) dynasties.

Ceramics

Chinese porcelains are known to have been imported into Islamic areas by at least the ninth century and porcelain imports continued during the fifteenth century and beyond (see Shen, CHAPTER 8). The collections of Yuan and Ming porcelains at the Ottoman Topkapı Palace in Istanbul and the Safavid dynastic shrine in Ardabil, and porcelains represented in paintings of that time, as well as archaeological finds at sites along the Gulf, show that various types of porcelains were imported (Krahl 1986; Pope 1956). Not only Chinese porcelains but also Vietnamese blue-and-white porcelains and Thai or Burmese potteries were imported into the Middle East during the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries. They have been excavated at the Port of Julfar in the United Arab Emirates and at other sites (Sasaki *et al.* 1994).

White and celadon porcelains, which were the most popular types of Chinese ceramics in the Islamic lands before the fourteenth century, gradually became outnumbered by blue-and-white wares from Jingdezhen. The courtly collections of the Safavids and Ottomans in Ardabil and Istanbul include blue-and-white imports of high quality. While according to historical sources, there were some porcelains among the earlier gifts to the Timurid court from the Ming delegation in 1417 (Roxburgh 2005a: 160; Zhang Wende 2006: 140–144), it seems that the royal collections did not comprise just the imperial gifts from China but also vessels of high quality purchased through trade.

Chinese potters, meanwhile, were very conscious of their Middle Eastern customers' tastes and aimed to please by adopting the shapes particular to Islamic

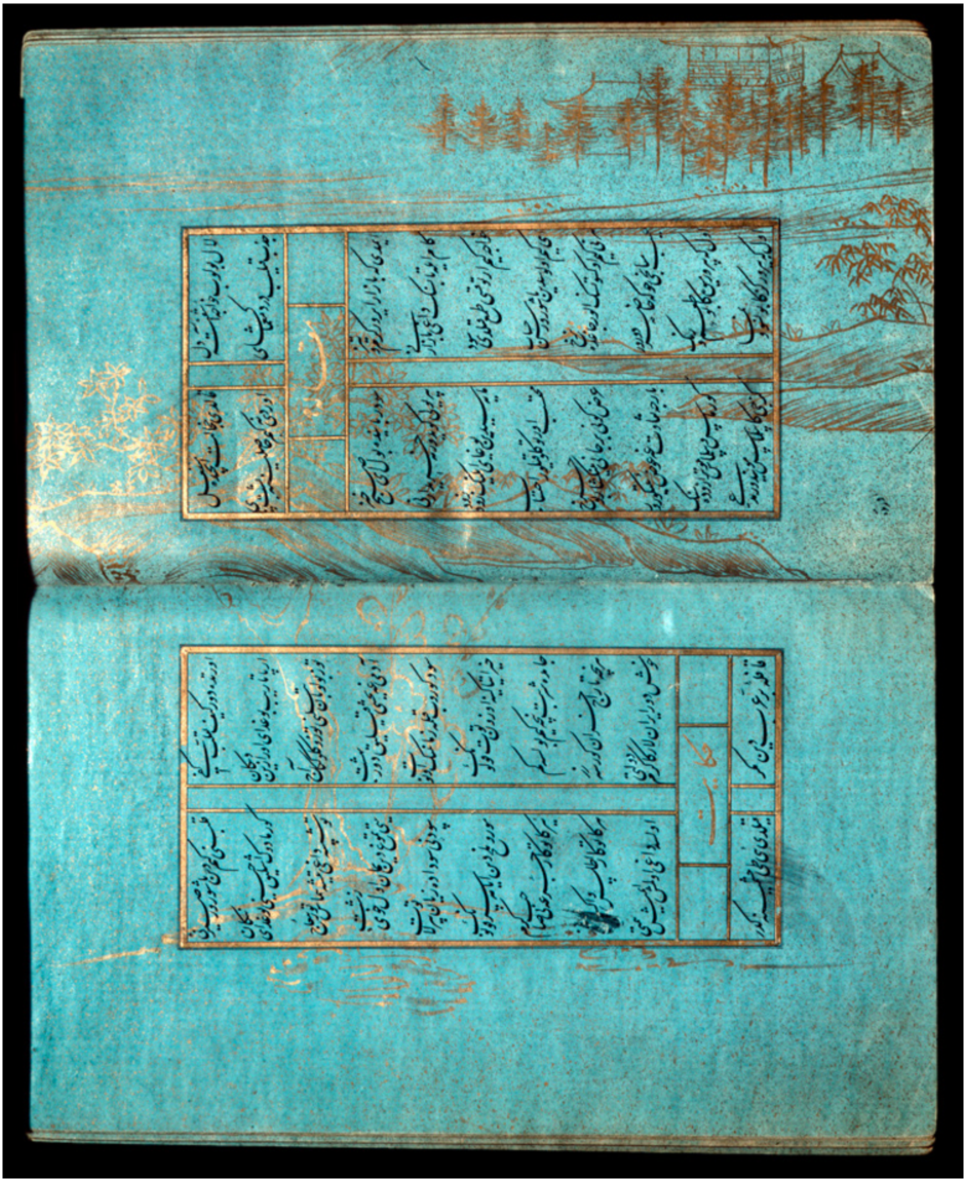

FIGURE 25.8 Pages from Haydar's Chaghatai poem *Makhzan al-asrar*, Tabriz, 1478, New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, Pers. Ms. 41, ff. 21b–22a. Source: Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. Reproduced with permission.

metalwork, such as pen boxes, candlesticks, and Timurid ewers with a bulbous body. They used metalwork vessels as models for their works because, unlike pottery vessels, these could be transported from the Middle East to China without damage. The Chinese potters also added Arabic and Persian inscriptions to their export porcelains. These inscriptions contain Qurʾanic quotations, maxims, blessings to the owner, and citations from Persian literature, and within the foot rings of plates are Arabic transliterations of the Chinese words for "Great Ming" accompanied by dates (Weng Yuwen 2011). Chinese emperors may also have been pleased with these porcelains of exotic shapes and inscriptions, because a number of vessels were not exported but instead preserved in the imperial collections in Beijing (now in the National Palace Museums in Taibei and Beijing).

In the second half of the fifteenth century, which marked the peak of Ming porcelain imports, imitations of underglaze painted blue-and-white earthenware were produced at many centers in Iran and Central Asia. One such example was produced at Mashhad in 1473 (State Hermitage Museum, VG-2650; Golombek 1992: 13–14) (Figure 25.9). Some Timurid imitations were so faithful to Chinese wares that they followed even stylistic trends and changes in decorative motifs such as peonies, birds, clouds, and waves (Bailey 1992). The quality of painting, design, and technique, however, is evidently inferior; thus the customers of these Iranian potteries were likely not courtly patrons (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 226–230).

The imitation of Chinese blue-and-white porcelains in the Middle East was not limited to the Timurids. During the fifteenth century, pottery with underglaze cobalt-blue painting of Chinese motifs on stonepaste bodies was produced in Mamluk Egypt, although Ming porcelains are rarely found among the Fustat finds from present-day Cairo (Watson 2004: 416–425). Ottoman Iznik potters of the mid-fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries also adopted Chinese motifs in cobalt-blue and white in the production of higher quality underglaze painted vessels, including lamps, candlesticks and pen boxes that were usually made of metal in the Islamic world but were found among the imported Chinese blue-and-white objects (Atasoy and Raby 1989: 37–49, 75–81; Carswell 1998: 28–44). Islamic metalwork was, as stated earlier, what originally inspired Chinese potters to create similar vessel types in porcelain.

Nephrite Jade

During the Timurid period, works in nephrite were especially favored by rulers and princes, as these luxury items represented a link to their Mongol heritage. This is especially true for Ulugh Beg, Timur's grandson and the fourth Timurid ruler based in Samarqand (r. 1447–1449), whose name is inscribed on at least four extant nephrite objects, all with his Mongol title *küregen*, which links him inextricably with the Chinggisid family (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 142–145, 223–226, 374).

In pre-modern China, nephrite from the Hotan area (now in Xinjiang) was an oft-used medium for various crafts. Though Hotan was under the control of the

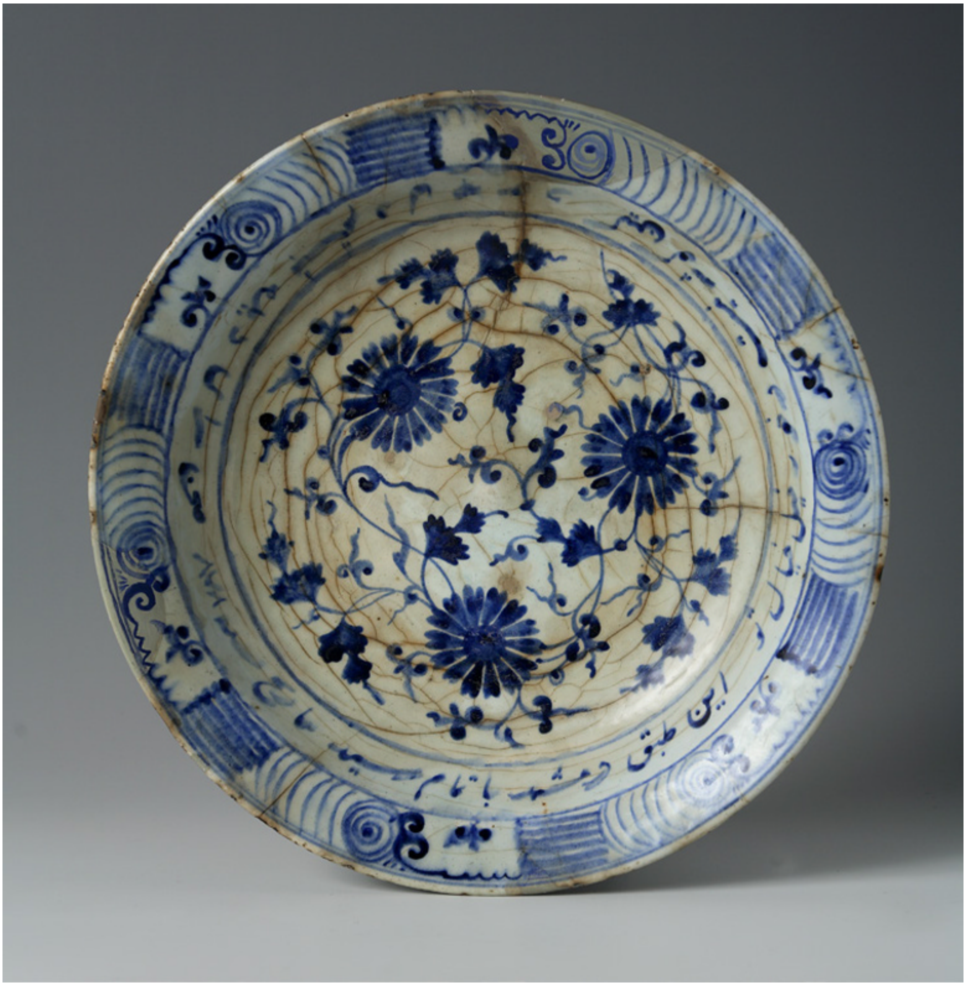

Figure 25.9 Plate, underglaze-painted, Mashhad, 1473, The State Hermitage Museum VG-2650. Source: The State Hermitage Museum/photo by Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, Yuri Molodkovets. Reproduced with permission.

Chaghatai *ulus* in the Great Mongol empire from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, the eastern portion called Mughulistan (which included Hotan) was not under Timur's control when he established his dynasty in 1370. He appointed his grandson Ulugh Beg as "governor" of northern Syr Darya and Mughulistan up to the Chinese border in 1404 (Barthold 1958: 52) and Ulugh Beg continued the campaign against Mughulistan to legitimize his title as governor. In 1424–1425, during his father Shahrukh's reign, Ulugh Beg was successful in battle and obtained two large nephrite monoliths, one of which became Timur's celebrated cenotaph that is still preserved at his mausoleum, the Gur-i Amir, in Samarqand. In its inscriptions, Ulugh Beg calls himself a *küregen* as his grandfather did and

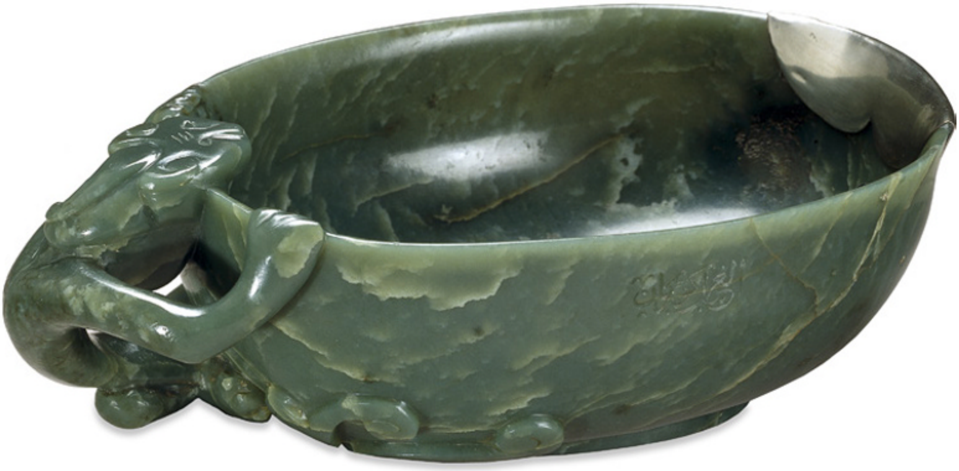

FIGURE 25.10 Cup inscribed with the name of Ulugh Beg Küregen, nephrite, *c.* 1420–1449, The British Museum, OA 1959.11-20.1 (36). Source: The Trustees of the British Museum. Reproduced with permission.

emphasizes Timur's identity as a member of the Chinggisid family, specifying that the monoliths were brought from *Qarshï* ("palace" in Mongolian) of the Chaghatai *ulus* (Barthold 1958: 100–101).

Another nephrite object inscribed with the name of Ulugh Beg as *küregen* is a vessel in the British Museum (OA 1959.11-20.1 (36)) (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 223–224, 354) (Figure 25.10). It has been debated whether it was made in Central Asia or in China. It has an oval body with a handle in the shape of a hornless dragon (*chi*) which bites into the rim and has a flattened head. Deng Shupin suggests that it is a water reservoir for grinding ink called *suicheng*, as this shape was used during the Ming period (Deng Shupin 1987: 32–34), and that it was a gift from Emperor Zhengtong (r. 1435–1449, 1457–1464) to Ulugh Beg in 1445 as recorded in the *Ming shi* (Deng Shupin 1987: 20–21; *Ming shi* 1974: 28:8599 [*juan* 332]). European and American scholars are skeptical of its Chinese provenance, however, especially because of the crude carving of the animal. Further, the deep green color of the vessel may have been informed by Timurid taste, as Chinese rulers always favored the transparent, whitish color for nephrite objects.

Whether or not the vessel in the British Museum is indeed the one recorded in the *Ming shi*, what is remarkable is the fact that Ulugh Beg, who had more secure access to Hotan nephrite than the Chinese emperors since 1425, received a nephrite artifact from the Ming emperor. Also, when the seventh Timurid ruler Abu Saʿid presented nephrite ores in 1456 to Emperor Jingtai (r. 1449–1457), the Chinese official in charge noted that only 68 *jin* (about 41 kg) was appropriate for crafting, the remaining 5,900 *jin* (about 3540 kg) being useless (*Ming shi* 1974: 28:8599–8600 [*juan* 332]). The reason for this poor appraisal of the ores is not mentioned, but it is possible that the color did not suit the Chinese taste. Thus during the fifteenth century, while the Timurids controlled the deposit of nephrite in Hotan, they still continued to appreciate Chinese craftsmanship in this medium. Timurid craftsmen first emulated the Ming designs and then established their own versions and vessel shapes. One example of Timurid craftsmanship is Ulugh Beg's famous jug (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 328), which later passed on to the Mughal emperors in India, who added their own names and dates to it.

Conclusion

Because the Timurids viewed themselves as descendants of the Mongol Chinggisid family, they favored Turkic–Mongol aspects in courtly art, such as the use of Uighur script in manuscripts and the use of nephrite. In most instances, the Sinicizing elements in Timurid art are not simply copies of Chinese originals or examples of *chinoiserie*. They are instead results of the assimilation and creative adaptation of Chinese artworks, which had been brought to Iran and Central Asia since the Ilkhanid period. The motifs and designs developed by Iranian artists from Chinese originals were refined at the *kitabkhana*s and embraced in Timurid arts and crafts.

Further studies in the repertoire of motifs in Timurid art in comparison with their counterparts in Chinese art may clarify criteria of acceptance of certain motifs. Moreover, current research in the subject matters of Chinese origin shared by Timurid and East Asian art, such as paintings of falcons, may reveal aspects of the trade in Chinese paintings to various areas of Asia during the fifteenth century (Itakura 2010; Nara Prefectural Museum of Art 2010; Sugimura 2002).

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26

Persianate Arts of the Book in Iran and Central Asia

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The arts of the book has always held a special place in Islamicate cultures. In its most modest form, the codex disseminated and preserved for posterity texts composed in various languages, principally Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. But books also became objects of pronounced artistic expression and ambition, demonstrations of their makers' dexterity, expertise in preparing materials, and knowledge of the history of the book. Between 1250 and 1450, manuscripts made for courtly patrons grew in technical refinement: although individual artists were proficient in several modes of artistic production (e.g., calligraphy, painting, illumination), contemporary documents suggest growing specialization commensurate with elevated standards of artistry.

A "royal mandate" (*manshur*) written in Shiraz on July 24, 1432, at the order of the Timurid prince Ibrahim Sultan (1394–1435) to Nasir al-Din Muhammad – renowned for his excellence in calligraphy, illumination, and painting – indicates much about the value attached to books and the artists who made them. The letter opens with the customary praise of God and transitions to the art of writing by extolling the Qurʾan: it was writing that "fixed" the miracle of revelation in a permanent form. The subject of writing gives rise to the broad topic of books and their artistic forms. Here, the culture of the book and those talented individuals who cultivated their skill in making them are praised. Emphasis is given to the permanence and durability of the book achieved through the quality of its materials and binding. Next, Nasir al-Din is introduced and commended for his skill: he is proclaimed to have outstripped his contemporaries and predecessors. The letter outlines his range of duties, highlighting oversight of illuminators, painters, colorists, the evaluation of the "program" (*taqvim*) of the projects in the

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workshop (*kitabkhana*) and specific tasks including “copying” (*kitaba*), “illumination” (*tazhib*), “depiction” (*tasvir*), “binding” (*tajlid*), and the painting (*naqqashi*) of buildings (*ʿimarat*), as well as fixing salaries and provisioning materials. Nasir al-Din was entrusted with the daily review of works in progress and granted ultimate authority over the artists and artisans who were instructed to follow in “the path of obedience and submission” (Richard 2001: 98).

While Nasir al-Din was of obvious importance to the Timurid prince Ibrahim Sultan – a valued asset to the court’s artistic activities – the artist is not mentioned in any other known written source after the 1430s. The habit of recording artists’ and calligraphers’ names and describing their achievements – and sometimes combining these profiles to produce art histories – peaked around the 1550s across several literary genres, especially the album preface. Other Persian sources included histories, biographies, treatises, and letters.[1]

One of the most commonly referenced texts is the preface authored by the calligrapher Dost Muhammad to introduce an album of collected artworks that he also assembled for the Safavid prince Bahram Mirza (d. 1549) in Tabriz, 1544–1545. Dost Muhammad’s preface was familiar to scholars by the early 1900s and adopted by them as a framework to model a history of Persianate visual arts in different formats (codex, single-sheet, album). The preface implied an evolutionary sequence of the book arts, focusing on calligraphy and painting, and traced the “depiction that is now current” to the artist Ahmad Musa, who famously “lifted the veil from the face of depiction” during the reign of the Mongol Ilkhanid ruler Abu Saʿid (r. 1317–1335) (Thackston 2001: 7). For Dost Muhammad, the forms and aesthetics of Safavid-period painting could be located in Ahmad Musa’s invention. He traced the origins of calligraphy to the prophet Adam, “who fashioned a pen and wrote on tanned hide” (Thackston 2001: 7), while he credited the most recent calligraphic “invention” – the cursive *nastaʿliq* script – to Mir ʿAli Tabrizi whom he styles “the qibla of calligraphers” (*qiblat al-kuttab*) (Thackston 2001: 9). Like related sources, Dost Muhammad’s preface was taken at face value by modern scholars – without considering its literary features and forms of bias – and information extracted from it.

A study of Persianate painting and arts of the book (Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray 1933) followed the general arc of a tradition encapsulated in Dost Muhammad’s preface and adopted its pronounced courtly emphasis: while artists and calligraphers were praised for their artistry and strung together in sequences resembling genealogies of practice and transmission, the preface also linked their collective achievements to the stimulus of patrons and the settings of courts. Although such a patronage model seems reasonable enough – patrons did sponsor artistic projects – it tended to grant a direct, sometimes inferred, agency to royal patrons in the formation of art traditions. Privileging the patron’s role – patrons who were often compared in early twentieth-century scholarship to Renaissance princes – resonated with the social attitudes and aspirations of European collectors, who sometimes were also scholars (Lowry and Nemazee

1988: vol. 1, 13–46; Soucek 2001). A more notional form of symmetry between modern collectors/scholars and historical patrons hinged on the practice of connoisseurship. This involved both an assumption – the idea that so many references to individual artists signaled an equivalence to the artistic personas of post-Renaissance European art – as well as a historical retrospection informed by the seductive parallels between Mughal stylistic attributions from the late 1500s and European notions about the relation between artist and hand. Hence, Mughal attitudes toward the image and its maker were transposed onto earlier historical contexts from the wider Islamic world, chiefly Iran in the post-Mongol era. Another effect of connoisseurship was an emphasis on stylistic analysis and description as diagnostic tools to date and locate books and single-sheet artworks. Formal features were not considered for their technical aspects, aesthetic values, or cumulative effects.

As art historical study of painting and calligraphy from the Mongol conquests onwards has grown, with many manuscripts studied and published in the 1900s, the incomplete scope and selective nature of Dost Muhammad and other near contemporary authors' narratives has become clearer. However, certain problems – how one models artistic production, the suitability of a stylistic terminology defined by dynastic group or metropolitan center, and so on – have not received the critical attention they deserve.[2] Responding to the lacuna, this chapter highlights key developments in artistic practice associated with the production of luxury books and focuses on what we understand, from written sources and the evidence of manuscripts, about their conception, design processes, and production. Another objective of the chapter is to model in temporal and spatial terms a sequence of key metropolitan centers (e.g., Tabriz, Shiraz, Herat), some of which overlap chronologically, where the arts of the book flourished under courtly patronage, and to punctuate those periods of production with ad hoc events that caused the movement of books, libraries, artists and calligraphers, or political struggles that resulted in dynastic expansion or contraction, rising prestige or diminished hegemony.

While *change* is typically stressed in the study of history, particularly changes of rule (between rulers or dynastic groups), it is equally important to consider stability, those forces that permitted and nurtured artistic continuity on the ground. No consistent correlation can be mapped between political and artistic change. This issue becomes especially important if we consider the factors that created artistic community, expressed by a formal and aesthetic constancy (usually elided by the use of the "school of X or Y place" model followed in Gray 1979). There are, for example, specific features of books associated with a place that withstood transitions of rule over time, which were practiced independently of court patronage but that also cycled back into courtly patronage when new patrons came on the scene. Such continuities were fostered by artists and calligraphers who continued to work despite altered conditions (Wright 2012). Some of their idioms were exportable – either by artists and calligraphers traveling to new centers where their work was valued enough to be maintained, or disseminated through portable books – while other idioms could not be replicated because of constrained access to artists with sufficient knowledge and ability. Aesthetic constancy results from organized and coordinated production and it was generally achieved under the leading direction of an individual of the likes of Nasir al-Din, to whom the mandate discussed at the outset was addressed.

The Arts of the Book under the Mongols

Various shifts can be identified in the arts of the book in the decades following the fall of Baghdad to the Mongol ruler Hülegu in 1258. Hülegu was dispatched to Iran and Iraq by his brother Qubilay with the objective of establishing permanent rule over those lands. This renewed wave of Mongol conquests – only a few decades after those led by Chinggis Khan – and the ensuing formation of the Ilkhanid dynasty (1256–1353), established ideal conditions for various forms of exchange between East and West Asia (recent studies of art and architecture under the Ilkhanid Mongols include Komaroff and Carboni 2002 and Komaroff 2006). Several changes in the arts of the book occurred and are known from extant manuscripts of the late 1290s through the early 1330s.

One of them, the *Manafiʿ-i hayavan* (The Benefits of Animals), by Ibn Bakhtishuʿ, copied in 1297–1298 or 1299–1300 at Maragha for Shams al-Din bin Ziyaʾ al-Din al-Zushki, embodies several of these developments (Contadini 2012; Komaroff and Carboni 2002: 141–143, 242). The Mongol Ilkhanid ruler Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) had ordered the translation of the original Arabic text into Persian. Under the Mongols, the Persian language grew and became more prominent across several literary genres and topics. In its features as a physical book, aspects of the *Manafiʿ-i hayavan* evidence both continuity with pre-Mongol practices, associated with illustrated Arabic texts, and change reflective of new exposures to East Asian images and their concepts and techniques of representation (see Simpson 1982).

The *Manafiʿ-i hayavan* is divided into four parts: human beings; quadrupeds; birds; insects and reptiles. The text describes features and behaviors of each creature before their medicinal benefits are presented. A single image illustrates each animal – frequently in male and female pairings – depicted inside a square composition set apart from the prose text that precedes and follows it (Figure 26.1). While the image is always placed between or adjacent to text, a thin ruling in red ink – sometimes a thick gold line edged in black – borders the image. Framing suggests the separation of image from text as if it were a space seen through a window whose extension beyond the border is inferred. But this spatial concept is applied inconsistently. Sometimes – most dramatically in the painting accompanying the entry on the horse – the frame radically crops the image, and the ground plane is modulated as a series of receding, overlapping lines to convey the illusion

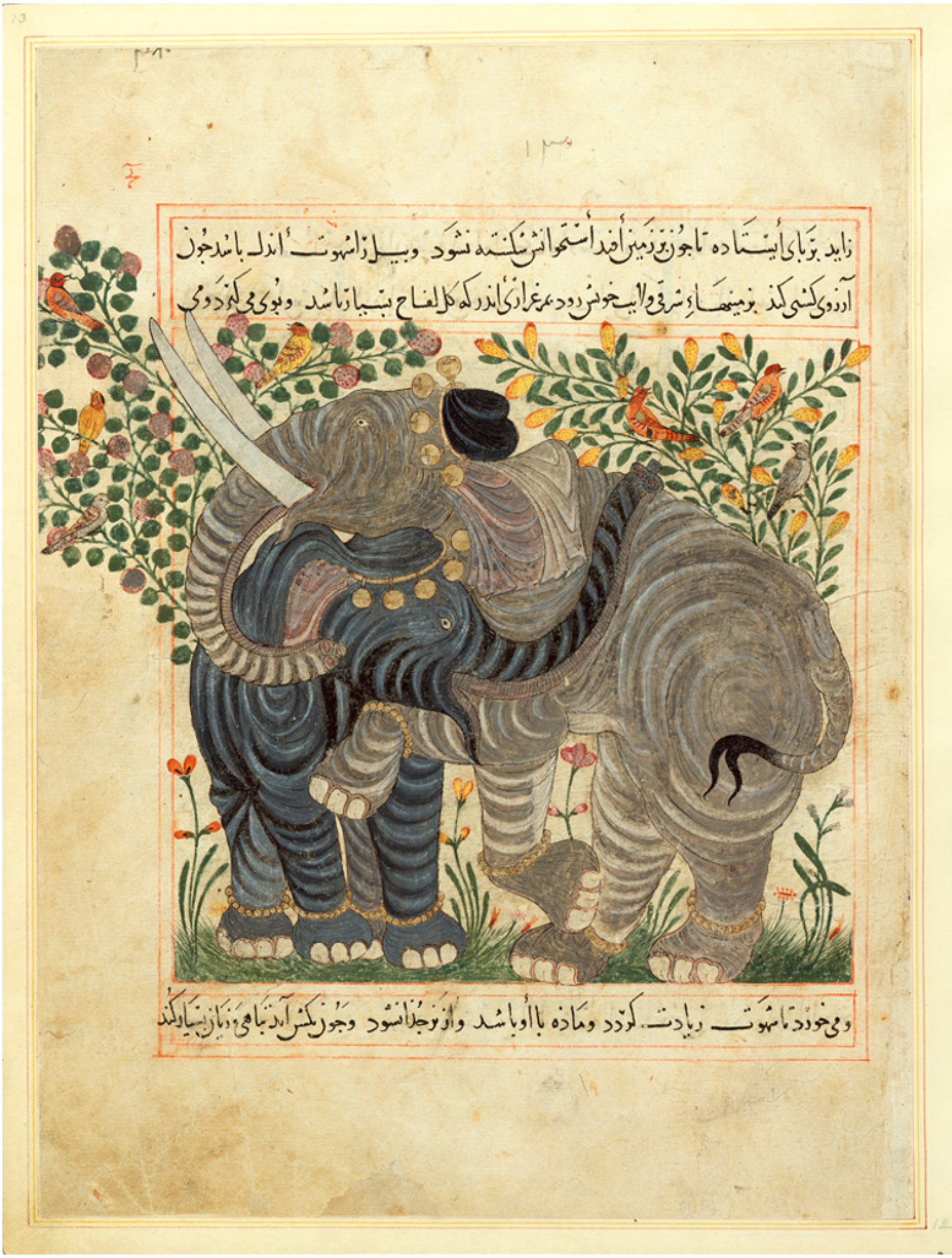

FIGURE 26.1 Two elephants, from the *Manafiʿ-i hayavan* (The Benefits of Animals) by Abu Saʿid ʿUbayd Allah bin Ibrahim, known as Ibn Bakhtishuʿ, Iran, Maragha, dated 1297–1298 or 1299–1300. Opaque pigment and ink on paper, 35.5 × 28 cm (folio). Source: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M.500, fol. 13r. Purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan [1837–1913], 1912. Reproduced with permission.

of spatial depth. Cropping and planar construction and the use of various tones of color and wash are believed to be pictorial inspirations from East Asian art whose dissemination was stimulated by the new Mongol world order.

Spatial organization in the illustrations to the *Manafiʿ-i hayavan* is generally dominated by an older concept, however, found in numerous illustrated Arabic manuscripts from Iraq and Syria made before and after the Mongol conquests (see Tabbaa and Contadini, CHAPTER 12 and CHAPTER 17). This spatial order positions the primary subject matter on a shallow ground line, scaling up the elephants, for example, so as to fill the space allotted to the image (Figure 26.1). Some sense of location is provided by signs of landscape (rock, earth, sky), most commonly vegetation, which frequently expands beyond the frame into the margin. Also consistent with practices of earlier illustrated Arabic manuscripts is the use of a bright palette of watercolor applied as flat fields of color. The image is painted onto the folio without fully covering the surface (for pigments, see Porter 1992).

The formal features of paintings, physical aspects of the codex, and pattern of text–image relation found in the *Manafiʿ-i hayavan* are applicable to other manuscripts produced under Mongol patronage. A high rate of illustration, especially in works of science, was operative, and images were closely keyed to their relevant text. Illustrations were frequently introduced by pithy captions – set inside boxes – that encapsulated subject matter or synopsized the narrative. The range of artistic sources present in the *Manafiʿ-i hayavan*, a combination of regional and East Asian picture-making traditions, was expanded in other illustrated manuscripts of the Ilkhanid period wherever there was a need for an iconographic type met by existing practice in other traditions. This was especially true among historical texts, some of which took the world as their subject: the illustration of history was another innovation of Mongol Iran. One of these historical works is the *Kitab al-athar al-baqiya* (Chronology of Ancient Nations) by al-Biruni (973–1048), made in 1307–1308 (Komaroff and Carboni 2002: 245 and figs. 136, 137, 170; Soucek 1975). It is a study of the calendars, festivals, customs, and history of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Manichaeism. Although the primary subject was the calendars of five religions, key historical events were selected for illustration in paintings that manifest the same pictorial inspirations as the *Manafiʿ-i hayavan*, while other aspects of its stylistic heterogeneity reflect adoptions of iconographies from different artistic traditions. These sometimes involve the translation of one iconography to serve another illustrative purpose, such as Gabriel – in the "Annunciation" – who is in the guise of a Buddhist bodhisattva rather than a Christian angel. Mary wears the customary blue and red robes found in Christian art.

A broader number of adoptions from different artistic sources is evident in the major illustrated history from Ilkhanid times, the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles) composed by Rashid al-Din (*c.* 1247–1318) and commissioned by Uljaytu (r. 1304–1316). This universal history composed in Arabic and Persian was composed of four parts: the history of the Mongols and Turks from Chinggis

Khan to Ghazan; histories of Uljaytu, the prophets and patriarchs, the pre-Islamic rulers of Iran, the Prophet Muhammad and the caliphate, the dynasties of Iran in the Islamic period, the Oghuz and the Turks, China, the Jews, Franks, and India; the *Shuʿab-i panjgana* (The Five-Fold Genealogies), of the Arabs, Jews, Mongols, Franks, and Chinese; and the *Suwar al-aqalim* (Figures of the Climates), a geographical work. No complete Mongol manuscript is extant. Two surviving manuscripts, dated 1314–1315, were made at the *Rabʿ-i rashidi*, the charitable complex endowed by Rashid al-Din outside Tabriz. The deed of endowment (*vaqf-nama*) for the complex includes a section detailing the workings of the *kitabkhana*.

The two extant portions of the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* are both from Arabic copies and share a large format that results from developments in papermaking (Bloom 2001: 178–201). The *vaqf-nama* of Rashid al-Din's *Rabʿ-i rashidi* includes a set of articles describing which manuscripts were to be made each year and how. The articles also note that "every year the superintendant of the endowment shall send the copies that will have been completed to one of the cities of Islam, Arabic [copies] to Arab lands and Persian [copies] to Persian lands, beginning with the largest city and then the next largest." The copies should be "deposited in a madrasa that has a teacher well-known and renowned for his skill in the branches of knowledge," and were to be made available for copying and study (Blair 1995: 114–115). The cycle was to be renewed when every large city had received copies of books produced in the *Rabʿ-i rashidi*. The articles indicate a production program that is ideological on every level: the books were to be impressive and finely made so as to endure over time and would be forever linked to the founder by a prayer of dedication recorded in the books; the cycle of production was imagined as infinite, exceeding Rashid al-Din's life; licensed copies distributed from the metropolitan center of the Ilkhanid realm were to be used to make further copies ensuring the maximum dissemination of the text.

Despite the large format of the folio, illustrations to extant portions of the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* occupy rectangular, square, and stepped compositions outlined by simple rulings. Their conception of space and other details (e.g., unpainted ground) shares affinities with earlier paintings but are distinct through a new formal language. Although close inspection reveals the paintings to be quite coloristic, their initial impression is of a narrow chromatic range, almost monochrome. This results from a line and wash technique redolent of Chinese pen and ink and woodblock sources. Stippling and hatching are often used. In their iconography, the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* images have been linked to various artistic traditions, including pre-Islamic and Islamic manuscripts, Chinese scrolls and printed books, Byzantine and Crusader-era manuscripts (Blair 1995: 46–54). Stylistic diversity can be explained through the cosmopolitanism of Tabriz, especially during the reigns of Ghazan and Uljaytu, a cultural climate continuing under Abu Saʿid.

Although the universal history seemed to represent equal coverage to the totality of history, this was not the message conveyed by the illustrations (Blair 1995;

Komaroff and Carboni 2002: 147–150). It is important to consider how historical subjects were illustrated. Narrative was a privileged mode of illustration in the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh*; though the history of the pre-Islamic rulers of Iran is emphasized in the pictorial cycle, it consists of highly repetitive scenes of enthronement. The same is true for the section on China, which is reduced visually to a sequence of recurring ruler portraits that suggest dynastic continuity and lineage. Narrative specificity – of historical happenings, personages – is only granted to privileged groups, including the prophets and patriarchs, and the history of the Mongols and Turks. Hence, in pattern and mode of illustration, the paintings permitted an ideological inflection of a text that seemed to be universal and inclusive while at the same time setting up implied symmetries across the span of history that suggested, through historical cyclicality, Mongol predestination. Such differences in pictorial modalities – narrative specificity versus indistinctness – exerted a subliminal effect on the viewer/reader and did not simply result from whichever artistic models were available.

Linked to the category of historical texts is another innovation of the Ilkhanid Mongol era: the practice of illustrating Firdawsi's *Shahnama* (Book of Kings, *c.* 1010). Though appreciated as a versified work of epic themes didactic in content – connected to the genre of advice literature – the reception history of the *Shahnama* reveals its value as history whether its content was taken as fact or fiction. Though there is evidence of the salience of the *Shahnama* before 1300 – stories from it appear on pre-Mongol ceramics and as decoration in the Mongol palace at Takht-i Sulayman, *c.* 1271 onward, sponsored by rulers Abaqa and Arghun – the year marks a fulcrum in the production of illustrated *Shahnama*s when none is known to have existed before.

The earliest known illustrated manuscripts of the *Shahnama* comprise four books of diminutive size, hence their appellation "Small *Shahnama*s" (Simpson 1979). These manuscripts, possibly produced in Baghdad, offer the first evidence of a process of generating expansive pictorial programs for an epic text that traced the history of pre-Islamic Iranian kings from Gayumars to Yazdgird III (d. 651), spanning the eras of myth and recorded history, subdivided into cycles of kings. Despite their size and constrained compositions set in a multicolumnar text of rhyming couplets, the manuscript paintings convey weighty subjects with great energy and develop a consistent iconography within thematic typologies (battle, audience, heroic act).

An interest in illustrating *Shahnama* manuscripts expanded from imperial centers Baghdad and Tabriz (*c.* 1300–1330s) to Shiraz in southwestern Iran under the Inju governors. Paintings in Inju manuscripts are dominated by red and yellow without the full range of colors found in manuscripts produced in contemporary Baghdad and Tabriz. While these illustrated manuscripts might represent a deficit in aspects of their execution – because of their artists' technical limitations or access to the materials used to make pigments – they bristle with energy and employ complex compositions to arrange their narratives. Compositions are constructed from boxes and rectangles, are often stepped, and produce irregular outlines that depict actions taking place in adjacent spaces or bursting through the picture frame into the margin. The Inju *Shahnama*s can be understood to reflect a general contemporary interest in Firdawsi's epic, or specifically as appropriating a text that had by then developed imperial and metropolitan connotations.

These models for illustrating the *Shahnama* could hardly be thought to inform the major imperial manuscript of the 1330s, the "Great Mongol *Shahnama*," linked to Ghiyath al-Din (son of Rashid al-Din), vizier to the ruler Abu Saʿid. In the early 1900s the Belgian-born art dealer Georges Demotte disassembled it for sale. Fifty-eight folios with paintings are identified with the original manuscript (Grabar and Blair 1980: 1–12). The folios are of the large format shared by imperial Ilkhanid books and the scope of the paintings would have required sustained financial support and many artists. It is primarily for these reasons that the manuscript is placed during Abu Saʿid's reign.

The paintings are the work of artists unconstrained by any conceivable deficiency in technique: they exhibit a full spectrum of techniques and colors and liberal use of gold and silver. Their large surface area – unlike the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* – enabled the realization of experiments in composition and expansion in details. The resulting paintings are more than a match to Firdawsi's narrative, poetic imagery and metaphor. In the illustration of "Bahram Gur fights the Karg," for example, the mounted king stands in eternal glory after he dispatches the Karg (Figure 26.2). Though the horned, tusked head of the vanquished monster lies in plain sight at center foreground, it takes the viewer time to trace the contours of its massive body among and beyond the trees. While the passage of time is suggested by showing the effects of Bahram Gur's heroism, the image slows time down to emphasize the king's prowess and majesty in a static, perpetual, iconic moment. The developed landscape is fully enlisted in the narrative drama.

Through these and countless other means, artists of the Great Mongol *Shahnama* surpassed anything that had come before and fashioned an experiment in picture making that would never be duplicated. The innovation manifest in the paintings has long been recognized and explanations offered to account for the scenes chosen for illustration and patterns of emphasis (Grabar and Blair, 1980: 13–27). Commonly accepted is the notion that the stories were selected for their capacity to echo events from Mongol history, thereby legitimating their rule (Grabar and Blair 1980: 13–27; Soudavar 1996). Such arguments remain inconclusive, because the manuscript is fragmentary, and share a tendency to see Firdawsi's poetic narratives as reiterations of Mongol history. Equally plausible is that history was written through the epic model of Firdawsi's *Shahnama*. To later Safavid writers like Dost Muhammad, however, it was the visual power of the paintings that was paramount and that prompted him to identify its lead artist as Ahmad Musa, in whose illustrated manuscripts Persianate painting was born. Of them he lists four, an *Abu Saʿidnama* (lit. Abu Saʿid's book, considered by some

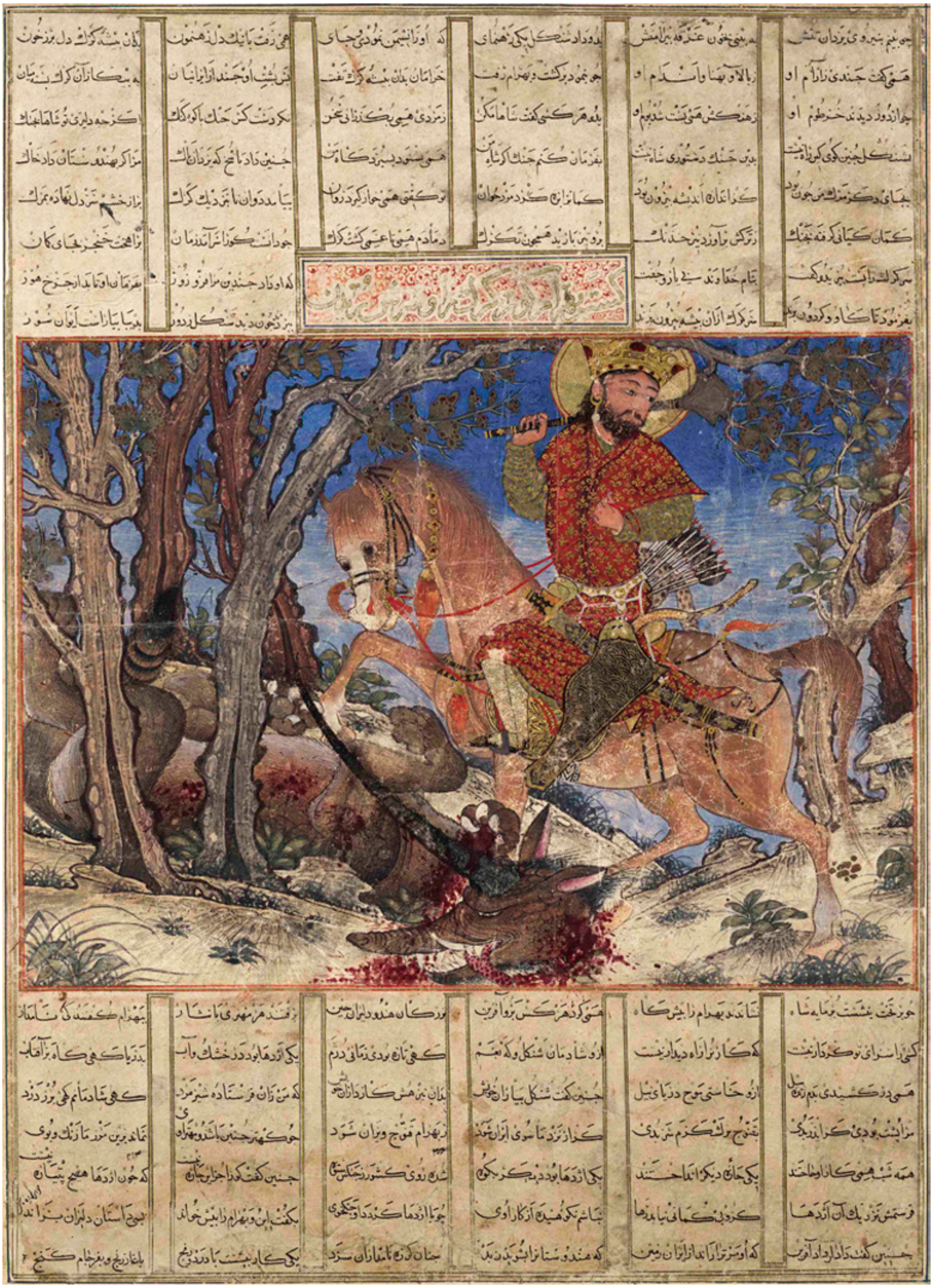

FIGURE 26.2 "Bahram Gur fights the Karg," illustrated folio from the Great Mongol *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) by Firdawsi, Iran, Tabriz (?), 1330s. Opaque pigment, silver, and ink on paper, 41.5 × 30 cm (folio). Harvard Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, MA, bequest of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1960.190. Source: Imaging Department, President and Fellows of Harvard College. Reproduced with permission.

scholars a reference to the Great Mongol *Shahnama*), *Kalila wa Dimna* (Kalila and Dimna), *Miʿrajnama* (Book of Ascension [of the Prophet Muhammad]), and *Taʾrikh-i Chingizi* (History of Chinggis Khan). He adds that the *Miʿrajnama* was copied by ʿAbd Allah al-Sayrafi, a student of the famous Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi (*c.* 1221–1298).

In calligraphy, specifically the "six scripts" (*al-aqlam al-sitta*), Yaqut was celebrated for his manner of cutting the reed, which allowed him to produce elegant calligraphy. In this he surpassed Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 1022), who was also credited with endowing grace to the canon invented by Ibn Muqla (d. 940). Ibn al-Bawwab and Yaqut are both believed to have perpetuated the proportional rules, or "regulated script" (*al-khatt al-mansub*), established for each of the "six scripts" (*naskh*, *thuluth*, *muhaqqaq*, *rayhani*, *riqʿa*, *tawqiʿ*) by Ibn Muqla. Yaqut was a towering figure in the history of cursive scripts, an eyewitness to the Mongol assault on Baghdad in 1258. Before the Mongols' advent, Yaqut, a eunuch, supported and educated through the patronage of his master Abbasid caliph al-Mustaʿsim (d. 1258), spent some of his career as librarian to the Mustansiriya madrasa in Baghdad. After the Mongol conquests, Yaqut worked with the historian Juvayni, who governed Baghdad for the Ilkhanids. Yaqut copied several manuscripts, multivolume and large-format copies of the Qurʾan, *diwan*s of Arabic poetry, and practice exercises consisting of hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), and wisdom sayings of the Arabic, Persian, and Greek traditions. Some of these practice exercises were compiled into an album before 1433 for the Timurid prince Baysunghur (1397–1433) where Yaqut's specimens are joined by examples copied by six other calligraphers (Roxburgh 2005: 37–83). These calligraphers perpetuated the legacy of Yaqut throughout the 1300s, an achievement that was nurtured and valued into the next century and beyond (Blair 2006; Gray 1979: 10–17).

The Arts of the Book from the Mongols' Demise to the Timurids

Dost Muhammad constructs a tidy sequence of artistic transmission through master–pupil relationships and patrons from Abu Saʿid to the successor Jalayirid dynasty (r. 1335–1432), he skips books and art made at a succession of smaller courts (e.g., the Inju and Muzaffarids), and subsequently at the Qaraqoyunlu Turkmen (1380–1469) court in Tabriz followed by their Aqqoyunlu Turkmen successors. Modern art historians have not yet retraced these developments with as much confidence or ease. This also results from a small number of complete manuscripts, which offer compelling evidence of innovation and change, but stand as isolated and disconnected artistic "events" – especially the "Three *Masnavi*s" of Khvaju Kirmani dated 1396 made in Jalayirid Baghdad – paradoxically mature in both conception and expression. A large number of single-sheet paintings, drawings, and calligraphies, assembled into albums now in Berlin and

Istanbul, may be added to this corpus but have resisted systematic historical organization through stylistic analysis and comparison to dated materials (Ipşiroğlu 1964; Lentz and Lowry 1989: esp. 159–236).

The patchy, incomplete history of the arts of the book from the Mongols' demise to the Jalayirids' ascendance may never be fully resolved. Several features of artistic production can be described, however. The first is obvious enough: finely made books with complex illustration programs became a key medium of courtly production, elite commodities also sponsored at subimperial levels in multiple centers. While production in the imperial centers Baghdad and Tabriz seems to have waxed and waned, others like Shiraz evidence continuity of production from the Inju through to the Timurids even at times when centralized patronage through courtly sponsorship was lacking (Wright 2012).

The most critical sequence of artistic developments in the post-Mongol era seems to have taken place under Jalayirid rule. Mongol in origin, the Jalayirids were one of several dynasties to succeed the Ilkhanids. From the 1330s until the 1430s, the seat of Jalayirid dominion was based in Tabriz and Baghdad. Their rule is marked by intermittent, but limited, territorial expansion (the Muzaffarids of Fars were for a time their vassals) and endemic threats to their political power from regional hereditary kingships, such as the Shirvanshahs of Azerbaijan, as well as ascendant powers such as the Turko-Mongol Timurids in eastern Iran and Central Asia and the Turkmen Qaraqoyunlu based in southeastern Anatolia. Campaigns waged by Timur (*c.* 1330–1405) against the Jalayirids brought them to the status of vassals, a political relation that ended after Timur's death and the ascent of his son and successor Shahrukh in 1409. During a complex sequence of campaigns, Jalayirid power oscillated between Baghdad and Tabriz until the dynasty met its end in the face of the militarily superior Qaraqoyunlu in 1432. The Qaraqoyunlu, a Turkmen confederation formerly under Jalayirid suzerainty, now controlled western Iran and Iraq as vassals to the Timurids, a *détente* that ended with Shahrukh's death in 1447.

The late Timurid author Dawlatshah Samarqandi, in a series of biographical sketches, recorded royal Jalayirid patronage from the time of Shaykh Uvays (r. 1336–1374), of whom he asserts that he was "a refined and artistic ruler … quite capable in various arts" and that "he drew pictures in the Wasiti style at which painters were astonished. Khwaja Abdul-Hayy, the most outstanding exponent of the art in his day, was his protégé and pupil" (Thackston 1989: 12). Shaykh Uvays's son, Sultan Ahmad Jalayir (r. 1382–1410), also excelled as "patron of the arts" and "was proficient in … painting, illumination, bowmaking, arrowmaking, inlay … and wrote the Six Pens" (Thackston 1989: 13). Later patrons, especially the Timurids, modeled themselves after the Jalayirids as persons skilled not only in the judgment and making of poetry and calligraphy but also in the art of "depiction" (*tasvir*: drawing and painting). As in architecture, the Timurids often relied on artists imported from Jalayirid cities.

Several copies of Sultan Ahmad's collected poetry (*Divan*) are extant from the early 1400s, including one dated to *c.* 1410 (Canby 1993: 41–48; Lentz and

Lowry 1989: 54–58; Sims 2002: 255–257). Its folios of text, copied in the recently ascendant *nastaʿliq* script – which replaced *naskh* for copying Persian prose and poetry (Gray 1979: 18–24; Wright 2012: 231–254) – are divided in two columns. The text panel is ruled in gold and black and framed by a margin. It is in the margins that eight extraordinary pen-and-ink drawings unfold, composed in a manner that suggests their continuation behind the text panel. The drawings, drawn and tinted with black, blue, brown, and red in a panoply of graphic techniques executed with "hair pen" (i.e., brush) (*qalam-i mu*) and reed pen (*qalam*) depict landscapes inhabited by human beings, wild and domesticated animals, and angels. There are scenes of farming, nomadic encampment, scholars' assembly, hunting, lovers' dalliances, a cloud-filled sky with angels, a pure landscape with a tumbling river, none of them with any evident relation to the poetry. The figures suggest various inspirations including Chinese and European sources. While debates continue about the proper relation between these evocative and technically brilliant ink drawings and the poetry of Sultan Ahmad's *Divan*, three important observations – with important lessons – can be offered here. The first is the pictorial intelligence at work in the construction of the image in the marginal space. The second concerns the relation between image and text, an interaction that nearly always involved a contextual inspiration or prompt (from the text) but whose actualization as an image drew from a horizon of artistic sources and ideas. The third aspect is the full development of drawing as an artistic medium valued in its own right and not simply as a preparatory design medium.

Other aspects of the images in Sultan Ahmad's *c.* 1410 *Divan* – the pronounced vertical orientation of an image now grown to nearly fill the text space (*matn*) – were found in an earlier manuscript of Jalayirid patronage, the "Three *Masnavi*s" by Khvaju Kirmani (Figure 26.3) (Fitzherbert 1991). The colophon is signed by Mir ʿAli al-Tabrizi, dated 1396 in Baghdad, and one of the nine paintings is signed by the artist Junayd, the earliest known incidence of a painter signing a painting. A tenth painting, carrying an attribution to Khvaja ʿAbd al-Hayy, from the manuscript was bound into Bahram Mirza's 1544–1545 album. The 1396 copy of the "Three *Masnavi*s" has come to represent the *locus classicus* of Persianate arts of the book because its features and forms seem to realize a totality and render a template for the courtly book. While the number of paintings illustrating the text is reduced, each painting grows in complexity and detail, a fully described world surpassing the details conveyed by the text. The desire for greater detail without compromising legibility – and taking the easy solution of expanding the book's dimensions – placed renewed pressure on the artists' dexterity.

All of these aspects can be found in one of the paintings in the manuscript, "Humay recognizes Humayun" (Figure 26.3). Humayun, a prince from Syria, had seen an image of Humay, daughter of the emperor of China, in a dream and set out to find her. In one of several imagined and actual meetings, Humayun fights Humay, whose identity is concealed by a helmet. When the battle ends, Humay lifts her helmet to reveal herself. Complex relations between text and

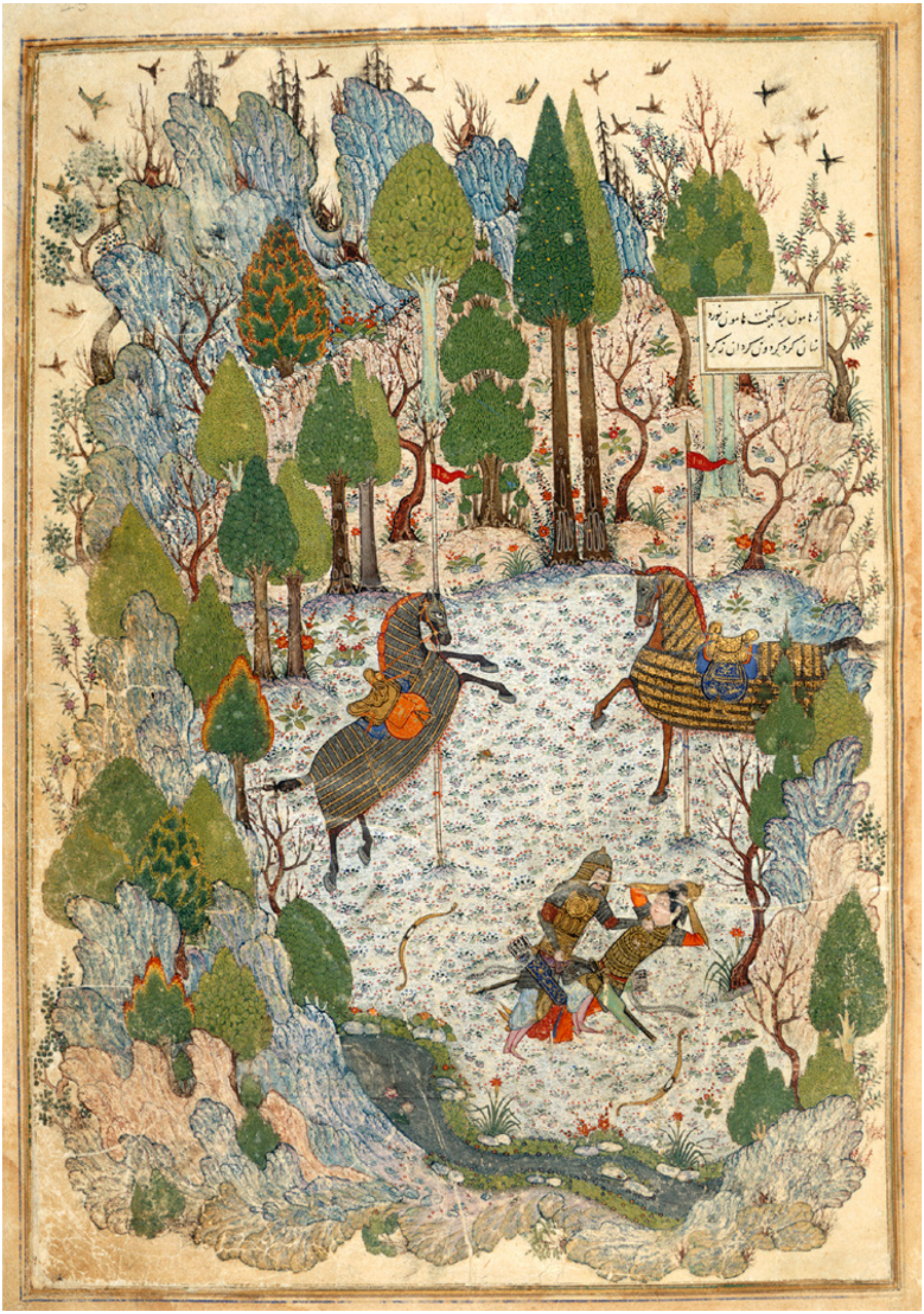
ز هامون برانگیخت هامون نورد
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Figure 26.3 “Humay recognizes Humayun,” illustrated folio from the “Three *Masnavis*” by Khvaju Kirmani, Iraq, Baghdad, 1396. Copied by Mir ʿAli bin Ilyas al-Tabrizi al-Bavarchi for Sultan Ahmad. Opaque pigment, gold, and ink on paper, 32 × 24 cm (folio). The British Library, London, Add. 18113, fol. 23a. Source: The British Library Board, Add. 18113, fol. 23a. Reproduced with permission.

image are constructed, one of them developing the literal concept of mirroring by forming a comparison between the visual image and the literary phenomenon of alliteration (Fitzherbert 1991: 142–143). This symmetry is advanced by the single couplet of poetry placed in a box at the upper right – "The plain-faring (horse) kicked up the level ground/(And) the turning heavens were hidden by dust" – where a number of similar letter shapes echo the visual pairs in the landscape (horses, trees, Humay and Humayun) (Fitzherbert 1991: 143). Analysis of the painting cycle shows a highly controlled relation to Khvaju's poetry, an intricate choreography between text and image that required advanced planning. This involved slowing down or speeding up the text by cutting or adding couplets of poetry. The motive in every instance was to preserve as much space on a single folio for the painting, images that accumulate finely painted details and intricate patterns in a glorious chromatic scale to make dense visual matrices in the intimate format of a book that measures approximately 32 × 24 cm.

The legacy of Jalayirid painting was keenly felt in the artistic production of the Timurids. Several Timurids are known as patrons of the arts of the book and the scope of their extant manuscripts, combined with written sources, makes it possible to model diverse aspects of courtly books from conception, to production, and reception (many examples are covered in Lentz and Lowry 1989). The earliest Timurid patron of substance in the medium of the book seems to have been Iskandar Sultan (1384–1415), son of ʿUmar Shaykh, grandson of Timur. As governor of Shiraz, Iskandar's restless political ambition and seditious behavior culminated in Shahrukh marching against him from Herat, his capture, and execution in 1415. By then Iskandar had assembled an impressive personal library. His small-scale books reflect the high standard set by Jalayirid production. Patterns of illustration – the nature of the image and their number – broadly correlated to genre (history, epic, romance, science), and the internal divisions of the book were made visible through illuminated ex librises, headpieces, and colophons.

The features of Iskandar Sultan's books also point to the coordination of the elements of the book – calligraphy, painting, illumination, binding – into aesthetic wholes, a holistic approach realized through organized production. The chief institution of such coordination was the *kitabkhana*, a working place that assembled the necessary human talent and material resources (raw materials, tools, designs, and presumably finished objects that served as models) of the kind described in the "royal mandate" discussed above (see Lentz and Lowry 1989: 159–237; Roxburgh 2005: 85–147). Though Shiraz was certainly the chief locus of production for Iskandar Sultan's books, additional examples owned by him were made in nearby Isfahan and Yazd. Occasional references in written Timurid sources record the habit of rulers and princes traveling with members of their court, including artists and calligraphers, hinting at peripatetic artistic production.

While Iskandar Sultan's books evidence a local continuity in a mode of illumination that came to be associated with Shiraz – dominated by blue and gold flowers forming complex figure–ground relationships against the unpainted paper sheet – the paintings, by contrast, reflect developments of near contemporary Jalayirid manuscripts in Baghdad and Tabriz, presumably reflecting access to Jalayirid artists. Iskandar Sultan's manuscripts are also interesting because of their points of emphasis: most are anthologies, convenient collections of texts treating different topics and representing diverse literary genres, works of prose and poetry, completely presented or shortened as abridgments. The best-known anthologies compiled for Iskandar Sultan, dated in 1410–1411, organize their densely copied, painted, drawn, and illuminated pages in two spaces, the text (*matn*) and margin (*hashiya*), the latter now routinely filled with text and/or image (figural, aniconic, geometric). A treatise on astrology in one section is positioned in the text field where prose is accompanied by a polychrome figural composition of the constellation Gemini from the zodiac (Figure 26.4). A title in gold *thuluth* script highlights the section on Gemini. The margin enclosing the astrological treatise has no text, given over entirely to an image more drawn than it is painted and executed in a limited palette that verges on monochrome. Here we see episodes from the well-known narrative of the Sasanian king Khusraw Parviz and the Armenian princess Shirin, told by Nizami (1140–1203) in his *Khamsa* (Quintet). The tale is a tragic romance in which Nizami explores the ruler's conduct, morality, and ultimately flawed self-realization. In one vignette we see two figures in conversation, while in the next one a mounted Khusraw sees Shirin bathing. These folios are typical of Iskandar Sultan's anthologies where the visual components match the generic breadth of the texts and engage in self-conscious artistry.

Patronage of the arts of the book is known in other Timurid centers, such as Samarqand and Herat, before the 1410s, but there can be no doubt that Shahrukh's march on Iskandar Sultan had a direct effect on artistic production in Herat from *c.* 1414 onwards. Shahrukh acquired Iskandar Sultan's treasury, which almost certainly included his fine books, as evidenced by subsequent close imitations of compositions from Iskandar's manuscripts in those made for Shahrukh and other patrons (for repetition, see Lentz and Lowry 1989: app. 3). In Iskandar Sultan's place, Shahrukh installed his son Ibrahim Sultan (1394–1435) as governor. Only a few years later, Shahrukh was compelled to send another son Baysunghur (1397–1433) to lead the vanguard in the Azerbaijan campaign against the Qaraqoyunlu Turkmen amir Qara Yusuf. During that campaign, Baysunghur entered Tabriz after Qara Yusuf's death. This would have been an ideal opportunity to gather whatever books remained of Jalayirid or earlier periods and the cream of human talent in the city. Written sources sometimes mention the acquisition, or recruitment, of talent at such transitional moments as well as the ongoing, voluntary movements of artists and calligraphers who sought patronage opportunities in different centers. Dissemination also functioned through the exchange of gifts between courts: this is known to have occurred between Ibrahim Sultan and Baysunghur (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 119).

Fine books were made in Timurid Herat before Iskandar Sultan's ouster from Shiraz in 1414, one of the best-known examples being an illustrated work of

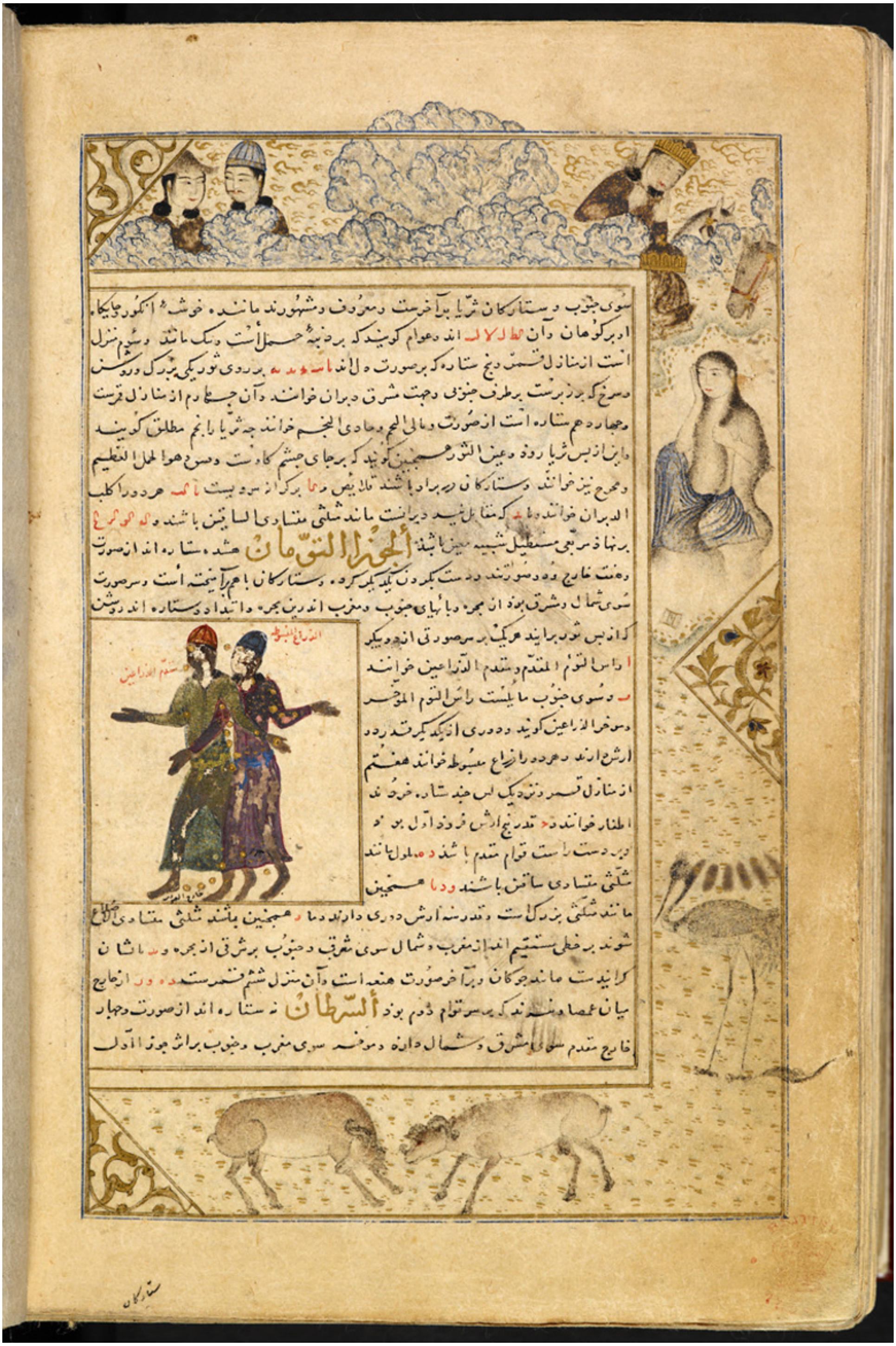

Figure 26.4 Gemini, marginal drawings of Khusraw Parviz watching Shirin bathing, and rams fighting, from a treatise on astrology in the "Anthology" made for Iskandar Sultan, Iran, Shiraz, 1410–1411. Opaque pigment, gold, and ink on paper, 18.4 × 12.7 cm (folio). The British Library, London, Add. 27261, fol. 538b. Source: The British Library Board, Add. 27261, fol. 538b. Reproduced with permission.

history, *Kulliyat-i tarikhi* (Collected Histories, completed 1415), by the historian Hafiz Abru for Shahrukh. Hafiz Abru authored several histories for Shahrukh that were made up into manuscripts in Herat. Several of them show direct emulation not only of the historiographic project initiated by Ilkhanid patrons and realized by the historians Juvayni and Rashid al-Din, but also of the illustrated manuscripts made in Tabriz before 1318. Painting cycles of Timurid-period histories exhibit mixed styles, some emulative of Ilkhanid models, others full-color versions of them but retaining the same emphatic horizontal composition that had been dispensed within most books at least since the 1330s. This offers one example of the broad-based Timurid practice of targeted emulation undertaken with the objective of improvement and not slavish reproduction (creativity in the visual arts, just as in poetry, was predicated on imitation). As in other artistic forms – ranging from portable objects and architecture – the artists of the book of the early Timurid period engaged in a studied dialogue with art of the past.

The ideological value of the Ilkhanid historiographic project was taken up by the Timurid elite and developed through the agency of a host of scholars, calligraphers, and artists. The Timurid dynasty's engagement with Islam's urban, sedentary culture, particularly from the rule of Shahrukh (r. 1409–1447), has been understood as an ongoing process of assimilation, a movement away from the political and cultural institutions, values, and symbols of Turko-Mongol nomadism: Shahrukh was styled in official texts as the "emperor of Islam" (*padishah-i Islam*) and "renewer" (*mujaddid*) (Roxburgh 2005: 72). In this model of assimilation, the arts of the book played an important role despite their inherently private nature as objects (they did not activate the ideological role assumed by the broad dispersal of the *Jamiʿ al-tawarikh* in the early 1300s). Building on the art of previous dynastic traditions, the Timurids developed a cultural prestige that would be adopted and emulated by their contemporaries – Ottomans, Qaraqoyunlu, and Aqqoyunlu – and successors, the Safavids and Mughals (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 303–327).

Another facet of Timurid artistic emulation looked to Jalayirid manuscripts as sources, especially illustrated works of poetry, lyric and romance, and didactic texts offering guidance in statecraft and ethics. Enriched by the addition of new communities of artists from western Iran in 1414 and 1420, Herat became the production center of books of exceptional quality. This is evident from a corpus of extant books produced for Baysunghur from *c.* 1426 until his death in 1433 which stand out for their aesthetic coherence and uniformity as totalities, encompassing their bindings, calligraphy, illumination, and painting (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 122–139; Roxburgh 2005: 65–76). Leather, paper, ink, gold, silver, and watercolor pigments are of the highest quality, raw materials prepared and worked with utmost care and precision. A document from *c.* 1430 attributed to Jaʿfar al-Tabrizi, was written as a "petition" (*ʿarzadasht*), more a summary progress report of projects underway in the *kitabkhana* (Thackston 2001: 43–47). The first section enumerates the status of different books – as well as an inlaid saddle, after a design by Amir Dawlatyar, and a "little chest" (*sanduqcha*) being made for a princess – and names the individual artists responsible for them. The text includes a description of royal building projects, tents, and the embroidery of their textiles. It is generally accepted that the Herat *kitabkhana* was directed by Jaʿfar, originating from Tabriz and appointed chief calligrapher of Baysunghur's books. While Jalayirid books were emulated – even the fine filigree doublures of Baysunghur's books had precedents in them – these new Timurid products exceeded their models in consistency and mastery over materials and techniques (for examples of Jalayirid and Timurid bindings, see Gray 1979: 68, 76–84, 86).

Apart from those developments, Timurid books of the 1420s reflect renewed exposure to Chinese art stemming from the regular embassies exchanged between Shahrukh and Ming dynasty emperor Yongle (r. 1402–1424) (see Masuya, CHAPTER 25). Baysunghur sent an artist, Ghiyath al-Din Naqqash, as his representative on one embassy to Yongle's court in Beijing (the artist recorded a journal, see Thackston 2001: 53–67). Bindings and illumination, in particular, evidence the adoption of a repertoire of real and fantastic animals and florals (especially the lotus) from a variety of Chinese sources including portable objects such as carved and inlaid lacquers. A few Timurid manuscripts were also made up from precious colored and gold decorated Chinese papers.

The last courtly manuscript fully reflecting the artistic achievements of the Herat *kitabkhana* under Jaʿfar's direction, and Baysunghur's oversight, was completed between 1400 and 1445. It is a copy of Firdawsi's *Shahnama* made for Baysunghur's younger brother Muhammad Juki (1402–1444) with an ambitious program of illustrative paintings, numbering around 45 (Brend 2010). After Baysunghur's death, the role of oversight probably passed to his son ʿAlaʾ al-Dawla. A number of Timurid patrons were active in the 1430s and 1440s. The books made for them reflect a continuity of artistic norms established from the mid-1420s.

Muhammad Juki's *Shahnama* is one of three illustrated copies of Firdawsi's epic poem made for Timurid patrons, the others being made for his brothers Ibrahim Sultan and Baysunghur. Muhammad Juki's is closer to Baysunghur's in its effect. The text is arranged in four columns, delicately copied in *nastaʿliq*, with paintings introduced by synoptic captions in gold *thuluth* (Figure 26.5). Paintings encompass nearly the entire text field, complex compositions stacked up vertically and spilling out into the margin on occasion. In the painting of "Isfandiyar slays Arjasp in the Brazen Hold," we see the mountaintop fortress, nearly impenetrable, where the hero prince Isfandiyar has come to rescue his sisters from Arjasp, who is holding them captive. Isfandiyar devises a series of deceptions to gain entry to the fortress and dull the capacities of its defenders. The painting portrays a line of soldiers manning the crenelated battlements, while a few women amid the inner architecture look on the scene of Isfandiyar killing Arjasp. Moments later, Isfandiyar and his sisters will escape the citadel and set fire to it. The bird's-eye view of the fortress perched atop craggy rocks that fall out of the bottom of the

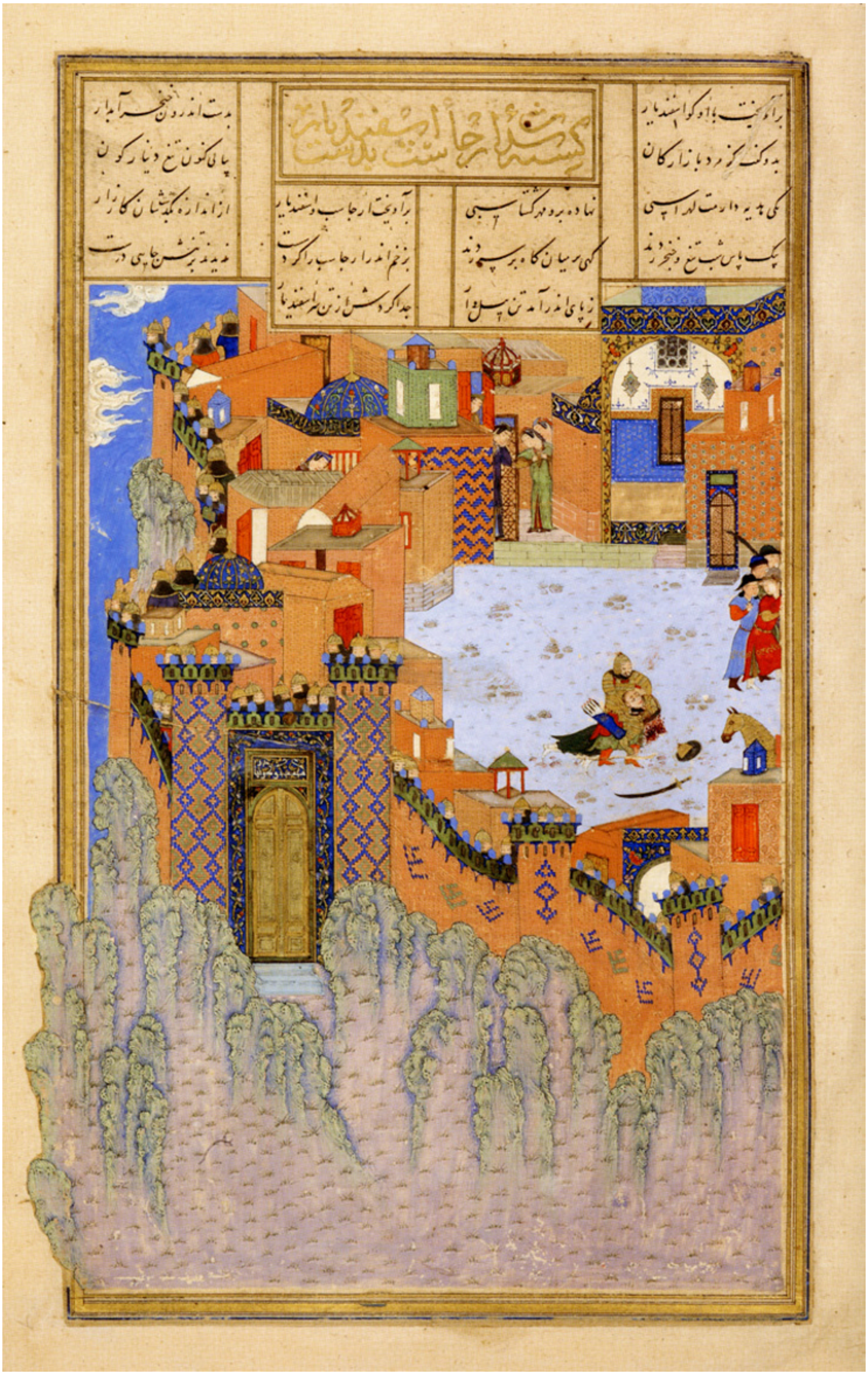
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FIGURE 26.5 "Isfandiyar slays Arjasp in the Brazen Hold," illustrated folio from the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) by Firdawsi made for Muhammad Juki. Afghanistan, Herat, *c.* 1440–1445. Opaque pigment, gold, and ink on paper, 34 × 22 cm (folio). The Royal Asiatic Society, London, MS239, fol. 278a. Source: Royal Asiatic Society, London, The Bridgeman Art Library. Reproduced with permission.

painting adds to the sense of towering elevation (Brend 2010: 113). The paintings are replete with sharply delineated details that convey the materiality – fabric, brick, stone – of objects. The color palette is intense and vibrant, running from warm to cool colors, pigment applied seamlessly without any trace of facture, of the presence of the artists' hands. What they also share with the paintings in Baysunghur's manuscripts is the complete idealization of subject matter and a static effect that is occasionally transformed into movement. The landscape and architectural settings of the paintings offer breathtaking displays of technical accomplishment and environments for complete visual immersion. The intricacy of the visual narratives and depth of details both required and sustained prolonged and repeated looking from the viewer-reader. This was the visual and material power attained by the arts of the book through 1450.

Production and patronage seems to have waned after Shahrukh's death in 1447, and the death of his eldest son Ulugh Beg in Samarqand in 1449, when the Timurids faced internal succession struggles and external challenges to their political authority from the Qaraqoyunlu. It was only in the 1470s that book production in Herat recovered, but then a much different visual style took form.

Notes

1 For several sources in English translation, see Thackston 1989 and Thackston 2001. The prefaces, and art historical sources broadly, are studied in Roxburgh 2001.

2 Most synthetic presentations of the Persianate arts of the book organize materials through dynastic chronology, beginning with the Ilkhanid Mongols and extending often into the 1500s and 1600s under the Safavid, Uzbek, and Mughal dynasties, with subdivisions by metropolitan center, as in Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray 1933; Gray 1961; Gray 1979; and Titley 1983. Other monographs were devoted to the arts of the book under individual dynasties, such as Stchoukine 1954. Recent overviews attempted to modify this organization. In Sims 2002, chapter divisions by textual and pictorial subject matter – non-chronological – is emphasized. In Canby 1993, a rise and fall teleology is inflected by chapter titles that suggest shifting priorities and artistic impulses.

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27

Later Qurʾan Manuscripts

Priscilla P. Soucek

Islam lacks any centralized religious hierarchy or universal governing body; consequently, no single approach to the Qurʾan's physical presentation has prevailed over the centuries and in the many places where Islam is practiced. Qurʾan copies from all regions and periods share the same basic structure with the text's separation into 114 *sura*s or chapters and the internal division of these into *aya*s or verses by means of lines or other symbols. The manuscripts treated in this chapter, produced between the middle of the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, are notable for their diversity of ornamentation but their scripts tend to fall into broader regional patterns. It is probable that most of the copies described in this study were not subjected to daily use and many are of substantial size, which suggests they should not be viewed as representative of all the Qurʾans in use during these centuries. The prestige attached to the copying of the Qurʾan encouraged those responsible for the creation of individual copies to document their involvement as scribe, illuminator, binder, or patron; information that can provide insight about the context in which Qurʾan manuscripts were produced and used (James 1988: 78–92).

By the thirteenth century, paper had replaced parchment for the Qurʾan's transcription everywhere except in North Africa and Spain. The switch to paper also increased the popularity of single-volume copies, but in Qurʾans of large size or those with elaborate decorative programs, a division into several volumes was common. Endowments which provided funds for the continuous recitation of the Qurʾan by a sequence of readers probably also encouraged the production of multivolume copies so that each section could be assigned to a particular reciter. Positions overseeing or performing such recitations were recompensed financially and had considerable social prestige (Salameh 2001: 42–45).

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As the revealed Word of God, scriptural clarity was particularly prized in the transcription of the Qurʾan in order to avoid alterations; normally each and every letter was rendered without emphasis or ambiguity. The Qurʾan's text is fully vocalized through the addition of diacritical signs that are often executed with a finer pen or in a different color than that used for the letters themselves. Usually the same script size and line spacing is used throughout a given Qurʾan copy. One exception to this practice was the treatment of the text block on a volume's opening pages which can have fewer lines of text written on a larger scale than was true on that copy's other pages. This is evident in a Qurʾan page now in Los Angeles, which bears a single line of text in place of the three lines found on that volume's other pages (James 1988: cat. 59, figs. 121–122) (Figure 27.1). Opening pages can also be surrounded by decorated frames or have interlinear ornamentation, features also evident in this

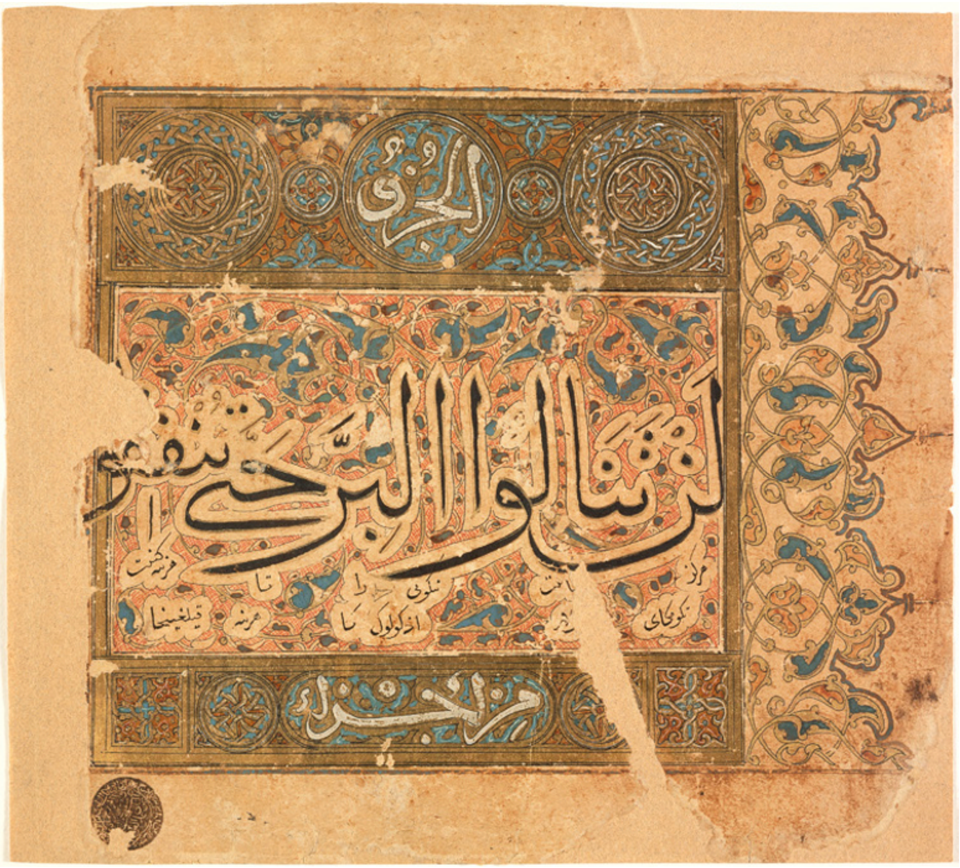


Figure 27.1 Right half of the frontispiece to Juz 4 (Q.39: 92) with interlinear glosses in Persian and Turkish, 27 × 29 cm, paper, gold, pigments, Turkey or Central Asia, mid-fourteenth century. Source: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M 73.5.490, The Nasli M. Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Joan Palevsky.

example. The design and ornamentation of colophon pages can also differ from the scheme used elsewhere in a particular volume (James 1998: figs. 15, 16, 35, 97). Some copies possess certificates of commissioning that document the identities of those involved. This same information could also be included in a colophon for the entire text or for each section of a multivolume version. In order to distinguish the mundane text from the sacred, care is taken to separate this information from scripture by framing it or by transcribing it in a fashion distinct from that used for the body of the Qurʾan itself (James 1988: figs. 72, 74, 86–87) (Figure 27.4).

Extratextual features of a Qurʾan copy, such as ornamented pages which precede or follow its text, section headings, and verse-counting devices interspersed throughout the text have a practical function and they also serve to enhance a manuscript's appearance. Opening and closing a volume with decorated pages provides a protective buffer between the text and its binding. Short quotations from the Qurʾan are sometimes added to these decorated pages (Figure 27.2). By the thirteenth century, it had become customary that each *sura* be provided with a decorated heading which gives it a name or number. Frequently that heading also lists the number of verses which that *sura* contains. This information is usually written so that it provides a clear visual contrast in epigraphic style, color, or scale to the script used for the text itself. At times, those headings are framed and surrounded by ornamental patterns (Figure 27.1).

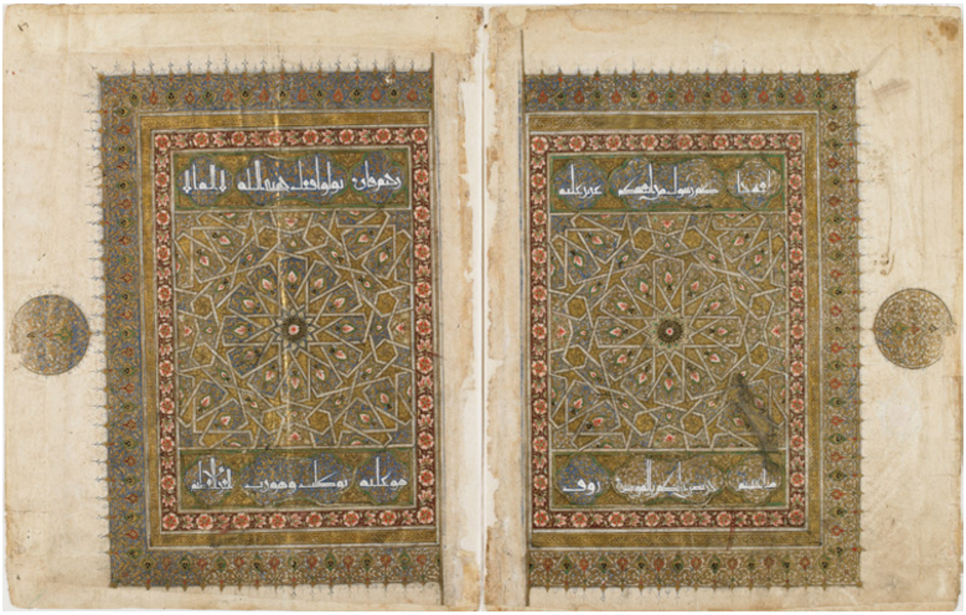


FIGURE 27.2 Double-page frontispiece from a Qurʾan, Egypt (Q.9: 128–129), *c.* 1370, ink, paper, gold, colors, 40.9 × 65 cm. Source: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1930.55 & 1930.59.

In Arabic, the verbal revelation is distinguished from its materialization as text by the Arabic term *mushaf* (pl. *masahif*), derived from the word for leaf or folio. The dual oral and written character of the Qurʾan is underscored by another set of markers enjoining a reader to pray in the several places where the text itself contains this command. By the thirteenth century these were frequently situated on the margins of a page. Many copies also include rosette-like devices that signal the completion of clusters of 5 or 10 verses, a feature that was probably intended to facilitate the text's recital or memorization (Figure 27.3). Most of these markers are modest in scale but in particularly opulent copies they can be embellished with metallic or colored pigments and abstract ornament. A separation into 5 or 10 verse clusters can also be used in Qurʾan translations, a design which probably had a practical function (Zadeh 2012: 269–271).

Qurʾans discussed here will be organized into three geographical groups of unequal size: (1) A western region comprising the Iberian Peninsula and the adjacent sections of North Africa; (2) the former Abbasid dominions of Iraq and Iran, the impact of which extended westward into Anatolia and eastward through Central Asia and Afghanistan into the Indian subcontinent and even reached China; and (3) an eastern Mediterranean zone consisting of Syria and Egypt. In these three regions, the 1250s are a period of significant change. In the west, the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries coincide with the decline of Muslim power in Spain which came to an end in 1492 with the fall of Granada. In the vast region which stretches from Anatolia to Iraq, Iran and Central Asia the middle decades of the thirteenth century were dominated by the Mongol invasions which culminated in their 1258 seizure of Baghdad. From 1250 to 1517 the Mediterranean zone of Egypt and Syria was ruled by a military dynasty known as the Mamluks which consisted of manumitted slaves who had converted to Islam. This group was also enthusiastic in the patronage and collecting of Qurʾan manuscripts.

Qurʾans from the westernmost Islamic zone – the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa – copied in these centuries can be divided into groups that are distinctive in their dimensions, materials, and scripts but which have in common various archaic features, such as the region's preference for parchment as a textual support. The more traditional copies exemplified by a Qurʾan dated to 703 (1303) and now in Paris (BN 385) bear a strong resemblance to manuscripts that had been produced in this region during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (James 1992a: 86–91, 212–213; Lings 1976: pls. 104–105). Indeed, the Paris example is almost indistinguishable in its design and script from one copied in Marrakesh in 1202 and now in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul (Revan 33: Lings 1976: 205, pls. 102–103). Both have a square format, are written on parchment in a delicate hand known as Andalusi that uses green dots for aspects of its vocalization, and have a text with unframed *sura* headings that are often integrated with the final words of the previous section (James 1992a: 86–91, 212–213, Lings 1976: pls. 104–105).

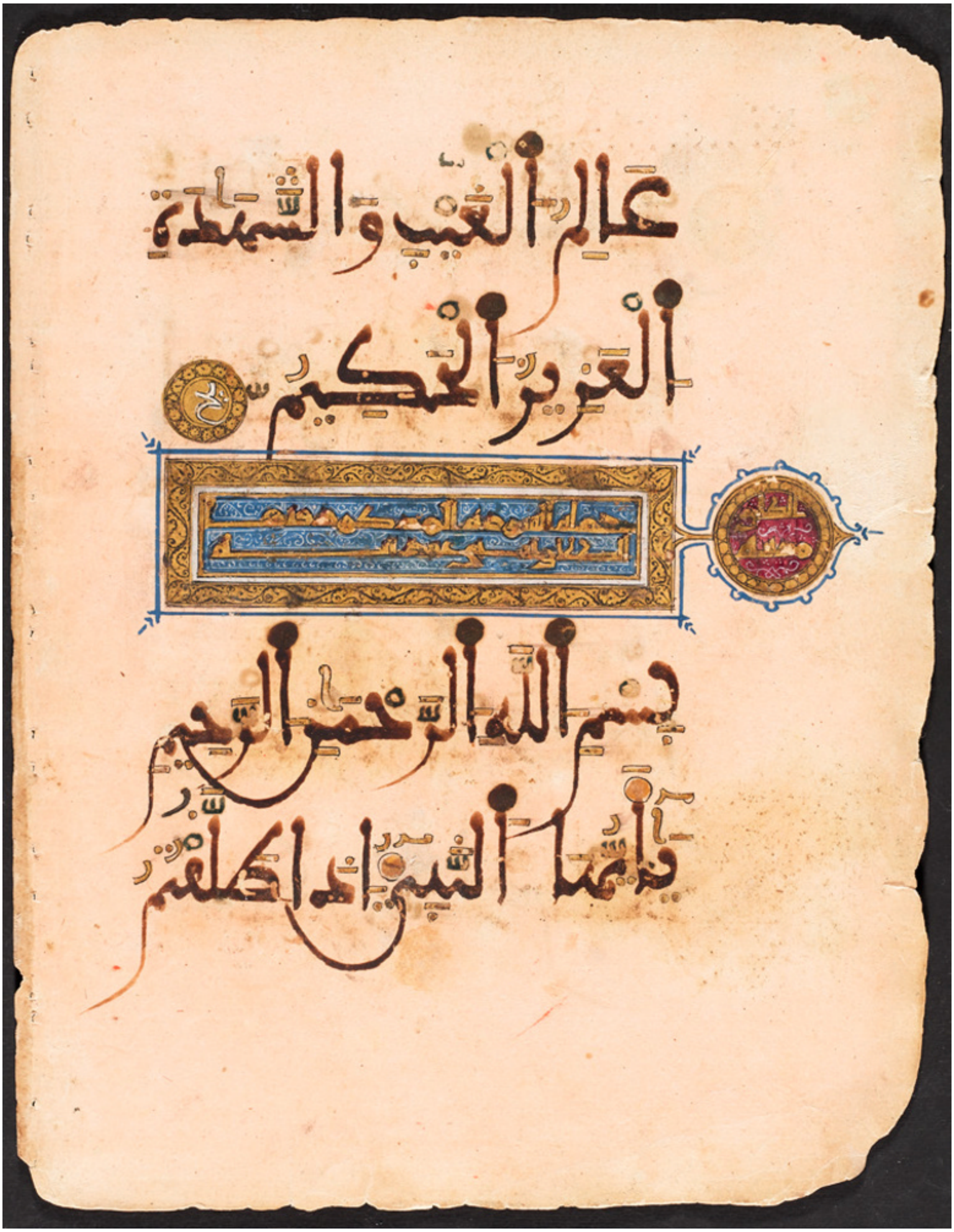


Figure 27.3 Spain, thirteenth century, Q.64.18–65.1, ink, colors, and gold on peach-colored paper probably from Jativa, 33.63 × 26.04 cm. Source: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M 2006.141.

The impression that this first group of Spanish and North African Qurʾans from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries continues the bookmaking traditions of an earlier era is strengthened by their illumination. The paired decorative pages that open and close such volumes employ a system of interlaced strap-work arranged in a geometric repeating pattern, an ornamental tradition which derives from similarly positioned pages used in earlier Qurʾan manuscripts written on parchment in the angular script conventionally called Kufic (Sijelmassi 1987: 54–55).

Some Qurʾans from the Islamic west combine conservative and innovative features. Many continue to use archaic systems of vocalization for diacritical signs that combine colored dots with horizontal strokes and retain the use of parchment as a writing material but have the vertical format preferred in the paper manuscripts produced in regions further east. When a Qurʾan from the Islamic west is written on paper, that material can be of high quality and dyed with various hues (Figure 27.3). Their script, often identified as "Maghrebi," appears to be a regional creation; it makes extensive use of letters with delicately executed sublinear curves which give pages an animated appearance. This mode of writing has a remarkable longevity; it appears as early as the thirteenth century and remained in vogue for several centuries with very little discernible change; in Sub-Saharan Africa its variants survived even into the nineteenth century. These features of a vertical format, a parchment support, and "Maghrebi" script appear together in a copy of the Qurʾan dated to 1250 that was donated to the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Another produced at Marrakesh in 654 (1256) has the additional importance of having been copied by a local ruler from the Almohad dynasty, Abu Hafs ʿUmar al-Murtada (Blair 2006: 227–228, 6.17; James 1992a: nos. 53, 56, pp. 215–215, 218–219; Salameh 2001: no. 11, pp. 56–60). The British Library collection contains a Qurʾan dated to 1701 which uses a script very similar to that found in thirteenth-century copies (Ling and Sadafi 1976: no. 52, pp. 40–41).

Another regional factor is the participation of local rulers in the creation of religious manuscripts. Royal involvement in the production of Qurʾan copies is demonstrated by a well-preserved multivolume set at the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, dated to 1344, that was copied on parchment by a member of the Marinid dynasty who ruled from Fez, Abu'l Hasan ʿAbd Allah (r. 1331–1351). Remarkably, this ruler is documented to have copied two other Qurʾan sets, one for the Kaʿba at Mecca and another for the Prophet's Mosque at Medina. The Jerusalem copy still retains 24 of its original 30 sections along with the handsome silver-ornamented leather chest designed to house them. Some volumes also preserve their original leather bindings which include protective flaps on three sides of the book (Salamah 2001: 66–83).

Abu'l Hasan's actions and intentions are further documented in endowment deeds that are placed at the end of each *juz* (section) and repeated in panels inscribed on the books' silver and gold embellished covers. Texts embroidered on the bindings' exterior covers include Abu'l Hasan's endowment deed along with Qurʾanic verses, which proclaim the book to be a gift from God (Q.14:50) and remind others not to tamper with this bequest (Q.2:181). His endowment specifies that it was his intention to endow these volumes for "recitation" (*tilawat*) at the Aqsa Mosque and it seems probable that his bequest included funds to support the Qurʾan's recitation, section by section. This intention is suggested by the inclusion, at the beginning of each of this Qurʾan's separate volumes, of the prayer commonly repeated before a recitation: "I take refuge with God from Satan the accursed" (Nelson 2001: 72–74; Salameh 2001).

A Qurʾan page in the Los Angeles County Museum exemplifies several of the distinctive qualities of this group of western Islamic Qurʾan manuscripts. It has a vertical format, uses the "Maghrebi" script, and is written on pink-dyed paper (Figure 27.3). This page bears a striking similarity to a Qurʾan from the Ben Youssef Library, Marrakech (Dodds 1992: no. 81, p. 311). Although undated, this Los Angeles page has been linked to thirteenth-century Spain by its distinctive pink-tinted paper which is believed to have been produced at Jativa (Blair 2006: 393). The persistent western Islamic tradition, which encouraged a fusion of personal piety with political power, is further exemplified by a Qurʾan copy, dated to 1405, that was written by the reigning Hafsid sultan for a mosque in Tunis using silver ink on brown-dyed paper (Blair 2006: fig. 9., pp. 11–12, 394–399).

Although the role of Spain's Christian conquerors in destroying copies of the Qurʾan is often stressed, the Iberian Peninsula was unusual in having Christians and Jews also literate in Arabic and this circumstance gave the Qurʾan and its manuscripts a wider regional audience. One consequence of this broader public is the fact that the ornamental repertoire of Qurʾan manuscripts was sometimes emulated in copies of the Hebrew Bible (Kogman-Appel 2002: 246–248, 257–258, figs. 12–13). Furthermore, European interest in and knowledge of the Qurʾan's text was facilitated by translations made in Spain. These included versions in local vernacular languages, such as Castilian, produced by Iberian Muslims and the even more influential renditions in Latin that were also prepared in the region. The first and most important of these translation projects was initiated by Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, who traveled to Spain in the 1140s to commission a series of translations of Arabic religious texts, including the Qurʾan. That commissioned version was completed in 1143 and its author was an English scholar, Robert of Ketton, who had come to Spain in order to prepare Latin translations of Arabic scientific and mathematical texts (Burman 1998, 2007; Van Dijk 2005: 140).

Although his translation antedates the period under consideration here, Robert's Latin text was widely copied in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries and its impact continued to be felt well into the sixteenth century when its text was printed (Burman 1998, 2007; Van Dijk 2005: 140). A second Latin translation made in the early thirteenth century by Mark of Toledo had a more modest impact but it was also known to scholars working in fourteenth-century Italy (Burman 2007: 122–133). These translations were used by various Christian authors who wrote polemical texts about Islam, but such copies also made it possible for Europeans to gain a personal knowledge of the Qurʾan's text for other purposes.

The Scribal Traditions of Iraq and their Dissemination

From the mid-eighth to mid-thirteenth centuries, Baghdad was both the capital of the Abbasid Empire (750–1258) and a center for culture and learning. Calligraphic practices associated with Baghdad were influential over a vast area, which stretched from Anatolia through Iraq, Iran, Central Asia, and even to India and China, far beyond the political or military reach of the Abbasid dynasty. Qurʾans produced in these zones between the middle of the thirteenth and the middle of the fifteenth centuries also reveal the development of local preferences regarding the ways in which the Abbasid scribal heritage was employed, leading to regional variations that grew more pronounced over time.

When the practice of Islam spread beyond regions where Arabic was widely understood, the need arose to assist converts by providing religious instruction in the local vernacular languages, a process that has been most closely studied with respect to Persian. Travis Zadeh has demonstrated that care was taken so that in Qurʾan manuscripts any vernacular translations or commentaries were graphically distinct from the Arabic text (Zadeh 2012: 2–23). Sometimes the Qurʾan's text was translated in clusters of 5 or 10 verses, but the most widely used method was to write Persian words directly under the Arabic original line by line, often without regard to the normal syntax of Persian. This technique became standard not only for Persian Qurʾan glosses but was followed in most of the Turkic ones created in the same region. Scholars have identified six different attempts to explicate the Qurʾan in various Turkic languages that range in date from the eleventh to sixteenth centuries (Eckmann 1976: 12–19). Some Central Asian Qurʾans were provided with glosses in both Persian and Turkic (Figure 27.1).

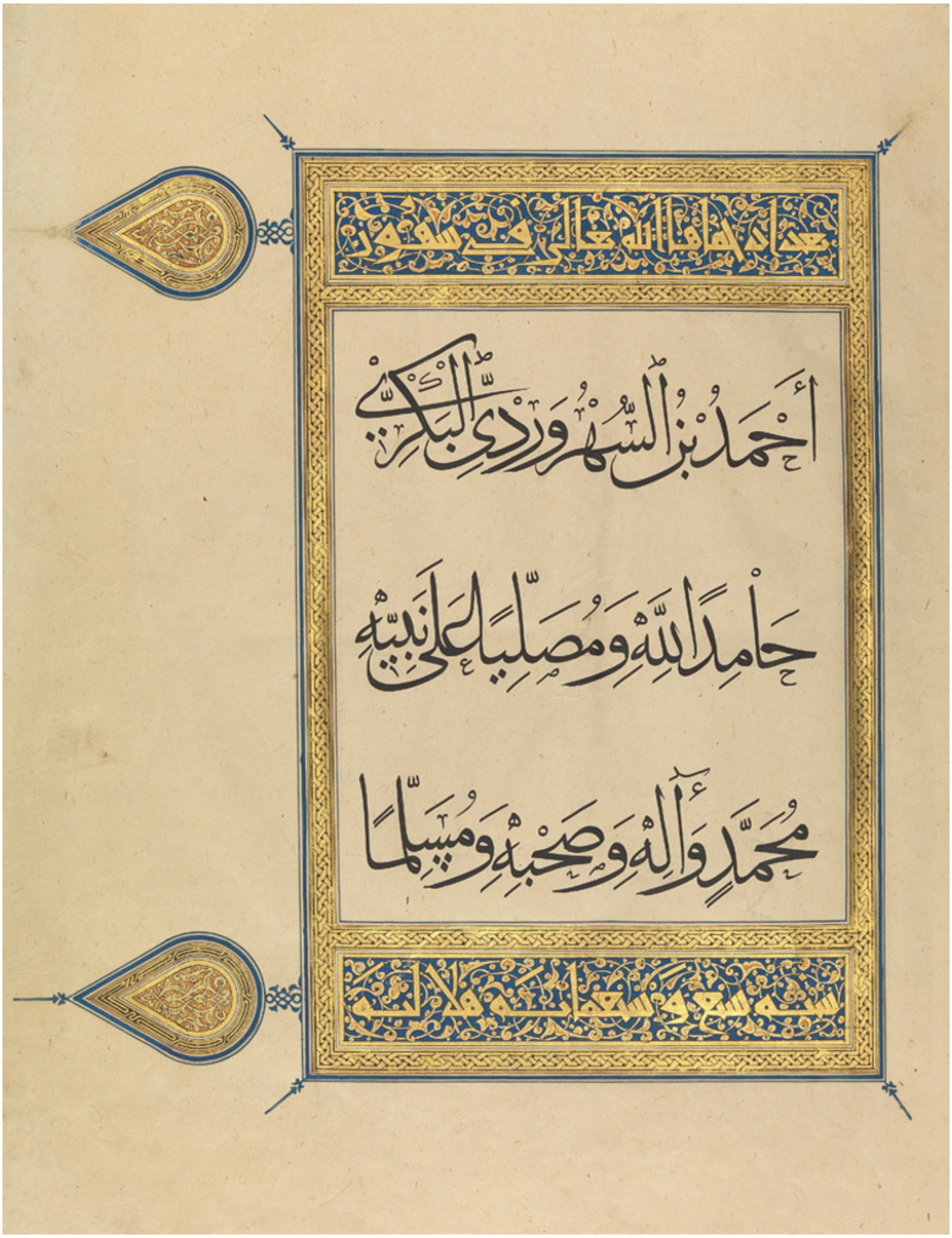
Abbasid calligraphic modes were embodied in both book production and architectural inscriptions which gave a calligrapher's work a public visibility lacking in manuscripts produced for individual patrons (Qadi Ahmad 1959: 24, 60–61, 68). The Abbasid scribal heritage of the thirteenth century is best documented in the work of that epoch's most influential scribe, Abu'l Majd Jamal al-Din known as Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi (1221–1298), a manumitted slave of the last Abbasid caliph, Abu Ahmad al-Mustaʿsim (r. 1242–1258). He not only survived the dynasty's fall that followed the 1258 Mongol sack of Baghdad but remained active as a calligrapher almost until his death in 1298 or 1299. Although he had belonged to the Abbasid chancery, he is particularly remembered for transcribing single-volume copies of the Qurʾan (Blair 2006: 242–243).

The calligraphic repertoire of Yaqut and other Iraqi scribes of his day included an assortment of scripts, usually said to be six in number, divided into three pairs, each of which contained both a larger and a smaller version with a similar degree of angularity or fluidity. Customarily, the scale of script employed was proportional to the dimensions of the surface on which it was being inscribed. Four scripts were frequently used in the Qurʾan's transcription. The most exacting and formally precise hands are those known as *muhaqqaq* and its smaller variant *rayhan*, both of which were widely employed to copy the Qurʾan's text. Another pair of scripts with more rounded letter forms are *thuluth*, often used for *sura* titles in Qurʾans, and its more diminutive counterpart *naskh*, which was frequently used for the body of the Qurʾan. The final script pair, and the most cursive, known as *tawqiʿ* and *riqʿa*, originated as chancery hands used to authenticate documents, so that they appear primarily in Qurʾan colophons. For example, the body of the Qurʾan copied in early fourteenth-century Baghdad by Ahmad ibn al-Suhrawardi uses the *muhaqqaq* script but one of its colophons displays some of the unusual ligatures associated with *tawqiʿ* and *riqʿa*, the more cursive scripts employed for documents and signatures (Figure 27.4).

Given that Yaqut was remembered as the master of six different hands, it is symmetrical that historical tradition recognizes six individuals as his principal students. Three of his disciples, Ahmad al-Bakri al-Suhrawardi, Arghun al-Kamili, and Nasrullah Tabib continued to work in Baghdad. Others, including Mubarakshah Zarin Qalam, were active both there and in Iran. The latter's student Yahya al-Jamal al-Sufi produced manuscripts for the Mongol era rulers of Shiraz. Another, Haydar Gunda-nevis, whose name implies that he was known for writing characters on a large scale, served the Mongol elite in Tabriz. The wide reach of the Iraqi tradition is indicated by the fact that manuscripts written by Mubarakshah in the 1340s helped to encourage the use of Iraqi modes of calligraphy in Egypt and Syria (Qadi Ahmad 1959: 60–61)

Although uncertainty clouds the identification of any particular example attributed to Yaqut, his signature appears on single-volume Qurʾan manuscripts of modest size, which were probably intended for personal use rather than public display. These are written in a highly regular version of either *naskh* or *rayhan* script with *sura* headings in the more cursive *thuluth*. These manuscripts range in date from the 1280s to the 1290s and display a considerable variety in the modes of their decoration. In several cases, later owners of Qurʾans bearing Yaqut's signature added new decorative pages to a volume's opening and closing pages which conform to the taste of their own time. His Qurʾans appear to have been particularly coveted by the Ottoman sultans and several examples are preserved in Turkish collections (Blair 2006: 242–247; James 1992a: 112; Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art 2010: cat. nos. 47, 48, pp. 222–223). Despite their modest scale, Qurʾans written by Yaqut usually open and close with full-page decorations and contain *sura* headings framed by ornamental bands. These embellishments are credited to Yaqut's collaborator Muhammad ibn Aybak b. ʿAbdallah.

Several Qurʾan manuscripts copied by Yaqut's calligraphic disciples or emulators also contain the signatures of illuminators. In some instances the same pair of



أحمد بن السهروردي البكري

حامدا لله ومصليا على نبيه

محمد وآله وصحبه ومسلما

سنة سبع وسبعمائة هلالية

Figure 27.4 Left half of a colophon signed by Ahmad ibn al-Suhrawardi al-Bakri, Baghdad, 1308, text in a script that combines *muhaqqaq* and *tawqiʿ* with headings in Kufic, 51.3 × 36.8 cm. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 55.44.

practitioners seem to have collaborated on several projects. Ahmad al-Suhrawardi is, for example, known to have worked with Muhammad ibn Aybak on some of the most impressive Qurʾans of this period (James 1988: 76, 79). Arghun al-Kamili, whose execution of *muhaqqaq* and *naskh* links him to the tradition of Yaqut, worked on several occasions with Muhammad ibn Sayf al-Din al-Naqqash (James 1988: nos. 41, 49, 62, 65, 66). Thus it appears that calligraphers working in late and post-Abbasid Baghdad focused primarily on writing and collaborated with other specialists whose responsibilities included the addition of ornamental pages and headings (Figure 27.4). At times a tendency toward greater elaboration even extended to the execution of the Qurʾan's text. In some copies, letters were written in one color and then outlined in a contrasting hue; at times a black text was outlined in gold and in other cases a gold script was framed in black. In one sumptuous Qurʾan produced at Baghdad in 1307, these contrasting color schemes are used for alternate lines of the text (Lings 1976: 46–47).

A practice which was popular in Baghdad, from where it may have spread more widely, is the use of quotations from the Qurʾan itself as part of a manuscript's embellishment. Short phrases in which the Qurʾan's text refers reflexively to its physical form or its revelation can be integrated with ornamental patterns on the opening pages of a Qurʾan and or added to its binding. A Qurʾan dated to 1286, now in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul, which is believed to have been copied by Yaqut, has these textual citations in the illuminated pages preceding the opening of its text. Exceptionally, such quotations are also included in the upper and lower borders of the first text pages, in a zone of the page usually reserved for *sura* headings. As will be discussed below, Qurʾanic citations are frequently used on the opening pages of manuscripts produced in Egypt for Mamluk patrons, but the same texts are included in copies from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iran (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art 2010: no. 47, pp. 222–227) (Figure 27.2).

Qurʾan Manuscripts from Anatolia, Iraq and Iran, and Central Asia

Many of the scribes active in a wide area extending from Anatolia to Central Asia continued to emulate the calligraphic preferences of Abbasid scribes in their Qurʾan manuscripts, but other aspects of their books are distinctive and reflect the demands of new patrons and the divergent artistic preferences of other centers. These include variations in size, the use of special paper, or the inclusion of varied decorative programs. During this period, the ornamentation of bindings also became more diverse through the use of metal plates to create molded designs, the application of colored or gilded decoration, and through the addition of colorful decorated doublures (Wright 2012: 258–282). Many of these opulent volumes seem to have been destined for use or display in religious buildings erected by their patrons.

The few manuscripts documented to have been produced in Anatolia between the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the fifteenth centuries are more notable for their embellishment with golden illumination than for their calligraphy and the most impressive example is not a Qurʾan but rather a poetic text in Persian. By chance, the same team consisting of a scribe from Konya, Muhammad al-Qunyavi, and an illuminator, Mukhlis ibn ʻAbdallah al-Hindi, produced two manuscripts in 1278, one a diminutive copy of the Qurʾan and the other a large-sized copy of a Persian literary text which was revered for its religious content, the *Mathnavi-yi Maʿnavi* (Spiritual Couplets) of the thirteenth-century mystical poet Jalal al-Din Rumi of Konya (Blair 2006: 366–370, fig. 9.1, Wright 2009: 72, fig. 42). The survival of Qurʾan stands produced in thirteenth-century Anatolia provides another indication that copies of the Qurʾan were revered in this context (*Anadolu Medeniyetleri*, III: nos. D.175–176).

Qurʾans Produced for Mongol Patrons

Although the earliest Mongol rulers of Iraq and Iran practiced a variety of religions, by the late thirteenth century, they had begun to convert to Islam and this led them to commission copies of the Qurʾan. Manuscripts copied for the Mongol elite are notable for the quality of their materials that included paper as large as 70 × 100 cm and the finest ink and pigments as well as for the finesse of their execution. As mentioned above, the most impressive manuscripts were often made by teams of craftsmen that included illuminators and other specialists who worked in tandem with the calligrapher (Blair 2006: 250–253).

Ahmad al-Suhrawardi al-Bakri is among Yaqut's followers who continued to be active in Baghdad even after the fall of the Abbasids in 1258 and the establishment of Ilkhanid rule. A page in the Metropolitan Museum of Art belonging to one of his Qurʾans bears the signatures of both this scribe and his collaborator, the illuminator Muhammad ibn Aybak ibn ʿAbdallah, and the date of 707 (1307) (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Rogers Fund 55.44) (Figure 27.4). This large manuscript, measuring 50 × 35 cm, is notable for the way in which the precise and formal character of its black *muhaqqaq* script contrasts with the manuscript's stark white paper and the volumes' colorful illumination in blue, gold, and brown. It has been suggested that the book was intended for the mausoleum of the Mongol ruler Mahmud Ghazan b. Arghun (r. 1295–1304), whose conversion to Islam marked a decisive moment in the dynasty's history (James 1988: no. 39, fig. 47, pp. 78–85, 89–92, 235).

Mongol Qurʾan patronage reached a pinnacle in the short reign of Khodabenda Muhammad, known as Uljaytu (r. 1304–1316), who commissioned at least three Qurʾan manuscript sets copied in a large format and divided into 30 volumes. One, copied in Baghdad between 1306 and 1313, and probably destined for his mausoleum at Sultaniyya, near Tabriz, is notable for its script which alternates between two variants of *muhaqqaq* script, one executed in and outlined in black and the other written in black bordered with gold (James 1988: no. 40, 86, 235–236; Lings 1976: pls. 45–47). Other Qurʾans made for Uljaytu were produced in Mosul and Hamadan. The Mosul Qurʾan, copied in 1306–1311 and sponsored jointly by Uljaytu and his two principal ministers, Rashid al-Din and Saʿd al-Din, was written and probably illuminated by a *sayyid*, or descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, named ʿAli ibn Muhammad al-Husayni (James 1988: no. 42, no. 45, p. 237; Lings 1976: 51–53, 54–59). The third of Uljaytu's Qurʾans, copied at Hamadan in 1313, is notable for the inventive character of its illuminated pages which make use of a limited palette consisting of blue, black, and gold to create pages covered with an almost kaleidoscopic variety of repeating patterns (Lings 1976: pls. 54–59).

The collapse of Mongol central authority in the 1330s transformed their major cities of Tabriz, Mosul, and Baghdad from centers of a vast empire into provincial cities of regional significance and many of their scribes, painters, and illuminators dispersed. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the city of Shiraz served as the major manuscript production center in Iran. Its most famous fourteenth-century calligrapher Pir Yahya ibn Nasr-i Jamali al-Sufi followed the artistic practices of Iraq and Tabriz, but he lived and worked in Shiraz, where he designed inscriptions and copied manuscripts for the members of two local dynasties: the Injuids and the Muzaffarids (James 1988: 163–164; James 1992a: no. 31, pp. 136–138; Lings 1976: no. 110, p. 72).

One indication of the importance of the Qurʾan for local religious life in Shiraz is the 1351 construction of a manuscript repository known as the *Khuda-Khaneh* or *Bayt al-Masahif* (lit. House of Qurʾan Codices) in the courtyard of the city's main mosque under the sponsorship of the local Injuid dynasty, namely the ruler, Abu Ishaq Inju (r. 1343–1354) and his mother, Tashi Khatun (Wilber 1955: no. 98, p. 183, pls. 196–198). Qurʾan copies housed there were used for daily recitations in the adjacent mosque and a few manuscripts dedicated to it survive (James 1988: no. 71, p. 196, 248; Lings 1976: no. 112, pl. XX). Tashi Khatun also sponsored the production of Qurʾan copies for a shrine dedicated to the descendants of the seventh Shiʿi imam, Musa al-Kazim (James 1988: 163; Wilber 1955).

The fourteenth century also marks the moment when the East Asian artistic vocabulary that spread to Iran during the period of Mongol domination was absorbed into various local decorative idioms. Two floral designs, one depicting a lotus in profile and the other showing an open blossom, seen from above that are depicted in manuscripts from the 1330s and 1340s gradually lose their botanical specificity and are integrated into vines as silhouettes isolated against a contrasting background. A manuscript from Shiraz begun in the 1330s and completed in the 1370s exemplifies these two stages, whereby a recognizable flower is reduced to part of a schematic and repeating vegetal pattern dominated by gold and silver vines (James 1988: no. 29, pp. 122–129, 130–135; Wright 2012: 48–55, figs 1, 3, 4, 28, 80).

In this reduced and abstracted form, coiled golden vines silhouetted alternately against blue and white backgrounds constituted the major decorative feature of Qurʾan manuscripts produced in Shiraz for several decades from the late fourteenth into the mid-fifteenth centuries. Some of these manuscripts were transcribed by members of the Timurid dynasty. The best known among them was Timur's grandson, Ibrahim Sultan ibn Shahrukh, who served in Shiraz during the 1420s and 1430s as governor (Lings 1976: nos. 81–83, pp. 174–176). The prominence of Shiraz as a center for manuscript production in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries helped to make its calligraphic and ornamental modes known and emulated over a wide area of the Near East and India (James 1992: no. 18, pp. 70–71; Lings 1976: no. 86).

One of the notable calligraphic projects credited to the ruler Timur himself (r. *c.* 1370–1405) involved the creation of a gigantic Qurʾan copy which was probably more than 2 m in height. The resulting copy, perhaps destined for display in the Great Mosque of Samarqand, was too large to be of practical use (Blair 2006: 265–267, fig. 11). It appears to have been unornamented and had pages with writing only on one side, but the impression of its boldly written pages is striking.

As was mentioned above, Qurʾans provided with interlinear glosses in vernacular languages are known to have been produced in Central Asia from the tenth to sixteenth centuries. Although this cultural practice is attested in literary sources, the dating and localization of any specific copy is hard to establish. A page now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art exemplifies the interest and challenges surrounding their study. Visual analysis has led scholars to attribute this copy to thirteenth-century Anatolia (Blair 2006: 370–373; James 1988: no. 59, figs. 172, 173, pp. 173–177). Although this hypothesis is sustained by aspects of the manuscript's decoration, it is contradicted by other factors, including its glosses. The language of a Qurʾan manuscript in the Rylands Library in Manchester, to which the Los Angeles folio bears comparison, contains a series of Turkic glosses, which have been identified as "Qarakhanid," a variant of Turkic that emerged as a literary language in eleventh- and twelfth-century Kashgar. As the principal written form of "Middle Turkic," it was also ancestral to a later variant used by the Timurids and Mughals known as "Chaghatay" (Bombaci 1964: xix–xx; Caferoğlu 1964: 273; Eckmann 1964: 138–143; Mansuroğlu 1964: 87–90). These Turkic dialects differ substantially from the Turkish of fourteenth-century Anatolia that is sometimes called "Old Ottoman" (Björkman 1964: 404–411). Furthermore, the practice of producing Qurʾan manuscripts with both Persian and Turkish glosses is primarily documented in a zone stretching from Samarqand to Kashgar, where such manuscripts were prepared during the eleventh to sixteenth centuries (Eckmann 1976: 7–19). Linguistic features of the Turkic glosses in the Rylands Qurʾan suggest a date of composition between the mid-thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuriesy (Eckman 1976: 14–17). A related manuscript dated to the 1330s provides an approximate date for the Rylands copy and the pages from it now in other collections (James 1988: 175–176) (Figure 27.1).

The spread of Islam in China was stimulated by the political and economic connections forged during the period of Mongol control (1206–1368). However, during the subsequent centuries of Ming control, local Muslims were encouraged to respect Chinese cultural norms (see Steinhardt, CHAPTER 24). The expansion of Islam overland from Central Asia to China carried with it the knowledge and skills needed to create Qurʾan copies for that region's established Muslim communities. To date only a few copies of the Qu'ran can be linked to this region during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries but they illustrate these opposing currents: transcription of the Qurʾan's text adheres to calligraphic norms established in Abbasid Baghdad, but ancillary features such as *sura* headings or decorated frames display idiosyncratic features which are probably of local origin. The earliest and most impressive Chinese Qurʾan, dated to 1337, embodies this dichotomy (Christie's 2006: no. 33). A second Qurʾan manuscript dated to 1401 and copied at Khanbalik, present Beijing, is now in the Khalili Collection (Contadini and Stanley 1999: 12–17). Both demonstrate the eastward spread of the scripts favored in Abbasid Baghdad and the way distant regions developed idiosyncratic local features in their calligraphic and ornamental repertoire. The 1337 copy manifests two divergent approaches to calligraphy. The body of this text is written in a variant of *thuluth* and has a Persian interlinear translation in *naskh*. What marks it as unusual is the varied and idiosyncratic fashion in which its illuminator has transcribed the *basmala*, or invocation of God's name that marks the opening of almost all of the *sura*s. Sometimes these words are arranged in a circle, at other times they are executed in reserve (Christie's 2006: lot no. 33, pp. 33–35). The 1405 Qurʾan is written in a form of *muhaqqaq* script that would be favored by Muslim scribes in China in subsequent centuries. This manuscript's illumination has frames with mitered corners, reminiscent of those used in woodworking, along with floral ornament with an East Asian flavor (Blair 2006: 9.2, Contadini and Stanley 1999: 12–17). The close resemblance between the calligraphy and format of these Chinese Qurʾans and those produced in Ilkhanid Iran and Iraq (Figure 27.4) indicates the persistence and perpetuation of Abbasid and post-Abbasid calligraphic norms in Qurʾans copied in Ming China. The Chinese Muslim community was able to maintain a modicum of religious instruction that focused on the transmission of this text, but ancillary features such as framing devices and section headings reflect the broader cultural setting in which the community had integrated.

The Qurʾans of India

By chance, the earliest dated Indian Qurʾan, produced in the city of Gwalior and dated to 1399, is remarkable because it contains 34 illuminated double pages each of which has a different decorative design. They are embellished with floral ornament somewhat reminiscent of that in contemporary Mamluk and Persian manuscripts (Losty 1982). Aside from the Gwalior Qurʾan which may have originated within a Sufi milieu (Brac de la Perrière, Chaigne, and Cruvelier 2010), most Indian Qurʾans appear to have been produced by and for the use of religious scholars who focused on the study or performance of its text.

Qurʾans produced in India during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are linked to those from Central Asia by their addition of Persian glosses written in a cursive hand and by their use of a variant of *naskh* for its text. Despites these parallels, Indian Qurʾans from this period are distinctive in their use of a script, known as *Bihari*, which stresses the horizontal parts and letters. Although it is used only to transcribe Arabic religious texts, in that limited role it endured from *c.* 1370 until the early sixteenth century. Customarily Indian Qurʾans are written in alternating lines with gold, black, and blue letters. Another local feature is the habit of incorporating one or more concentric zones of marginal commentary around the text block, an addition that has been linked to the role of such manuscripts in training professional Qurʾan reciters or other scholars (Brac de la Perrière 2004: 86–91; James 1992b: nos. 27–28, pp. 102–107). A folio now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art exemplifies both of these traits. Its text is written in gold, black, and blue letters and its outer margin contains a Persian commentary (Figure 27.5).

Qurʾans of the Mamluks

The third and final group of Qurʾans to be examined here are those associated with Egypt and Syria. From 1250 to 1517 that zone was ruled by a military dynasty consisting of manumitted slaves and converts to Islam, known as the Mamluks. From 1250 to the 1390s most of them were Qipchak Turks born in the steppes of southern Russia. In the following period, which lasted until the Ottoman conquest in 1517, they were primarily Circassians from the northern Caucasus. It is the earlier rulers of Qipchak origin who are well documented as patrons of Qurʾan manuscripts, most copies of which are believed to have been produced in Cairo (James 1988: nos. 8, 10, 20–21, pp. 64–65, 73, 147, 224, 227) (Figure 27.2). Mamluk patrons also collected Qurʾan manuscripts that had been produced in Iraq and Iran, but even more significantly, their patronage attracted calligraphers and illuminators trained in those regions whose skill and expertise were foundational to the establishment of manuscript production centered in Cairo.

High-ranking members of the Mamluk dynasty are remembered primarily as lavish patrons of architecture and during the first decades of their rule, their attention was directed to the construction of buildings. It was only in the early fourteenth century that the production of luxury Qurʾans became a major focus of their patronage and by the last decades of that century their support for book production appears to have diminished. The abrupt appearance and subsequent waning of this mode of cultural production raises questions about what prompted these shifts in patronage.

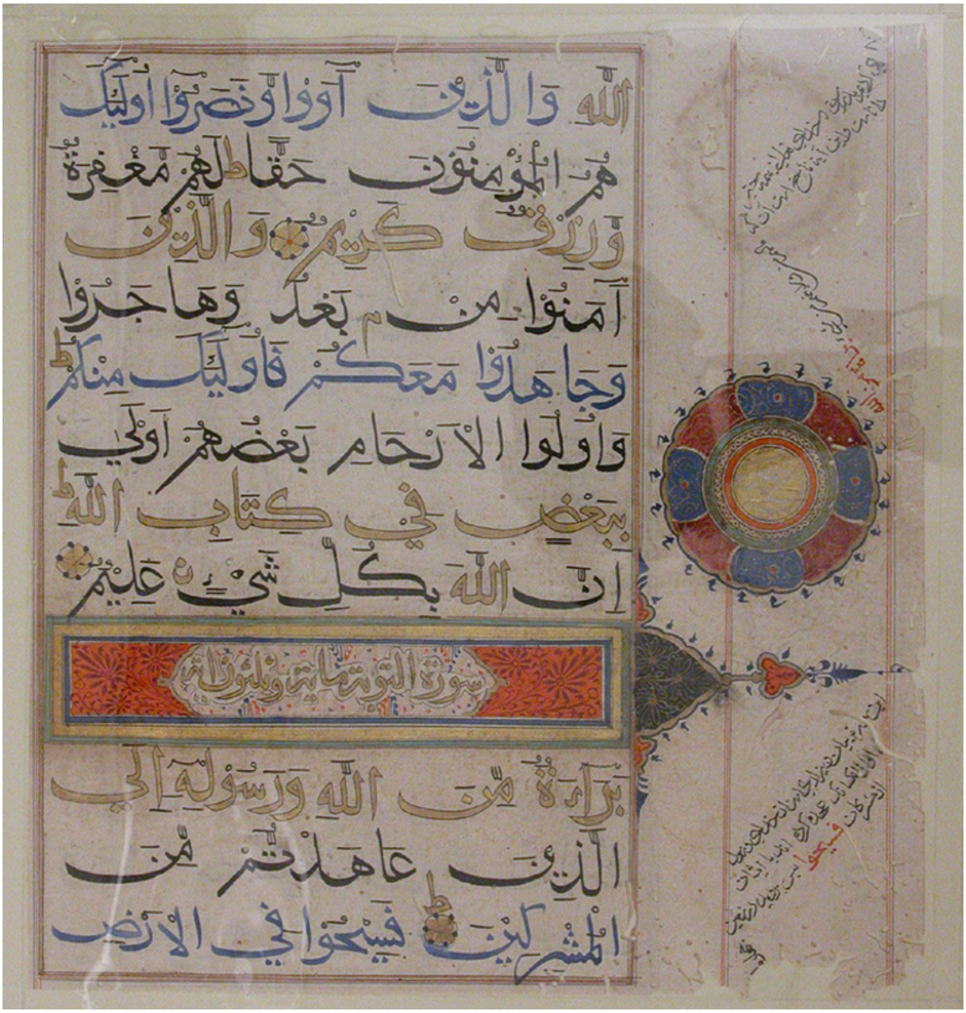


FIGURE 27.5 Folio from a Qurʾan manuscript, India, early fifteenth century, 22.2 × 23.7 cm, *Sura* 8:74–75, *Sura* 9: 1–2. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992.145.1.

For these reasons, one of the most significant of their manuscripts is the dynasty's earliest major commission, a Qurʾan in seven volumes dated to 1304–1306 and made at Cairo for Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Jashnagir (r. 1309, d. 1310) which is now in the British Library (Add. 22406-13). It was probably intended for use in a *khanaqah*, a meeting place or residence, for Sufis which he sponsored. The volumes' scribe, Muhammad ibn al-Wahid, is said to have been born in Damascus and to have trained in Baghdad under Yaqut. Despite this training in the canonical Abbasid modes of writing, he used an unusual script for Baybars' volumes. It is not the *muhaqqaq* or *rayhan* favored in Iraq but rather an unusual variety of *thuluth* executed in two shades of gold outlined in black and with some diacritical marks in silver (James 1988: 34–65). Most subsequent Qurʾan copies made in Cairo for Mamluk patrons are written in a variant of the common book hand known as *naskh* (James 1988: nos. 38, pp. 12, 14, 20–21).

In comparison with the anonymity that obscures our knowledge of the painters who executed the illumination in most fourteenth-century Qurʾans, many of those active in Cairo have a discernible individual approach and these distinctions are further reinforced by the presence of signatures or other documentary evidence. The individualistic styles of painting found in Mamluk Qurʾan manuscripts suggest that these various modes are extensions of the kinds of ornament once visible in other media now lost, such as architectural decoration or even textile production. In the case of Baybars' Qurʾan internal documentation reveals that its decoration was executed by four different individuals led by a eunuch named Sandal who was already well known as a painter prior to his work on that project (James 1988: no. 1, pp. 34–48, 65–72, 220, figs. 18–28). Those responsible for Baybars' Qurʾan can be linked to several other manuscripts produced in Cairo in the first two decades of the fourteenth century, but after this burst of activity Qurʾan production in the Mamluk capital seems to lapse until the 1340s. The most striking characteristics of this mid-century group is the inclusion of entirely ornamental pages constructed around 12-pointed stars embellished with compartments framing flower buds shown in profile. Like Muhammad ibn Wahid, several of the calligraphers and illuminators active in Cairo during the 1340s are believed to have been trained elsewhere, possibly in Syria (James 1988: no. 20, fig. 98, p. 147).

For Mamluk Cairo, the creative pinnacle of Qurʾan production occurs in the reign of Sultan Shaʿban (r. 1363–1376). Several of the manuscripts of this period were intended for use in institutions sponsored by this sultan and his mother, Khwand Barakah. One of the artists most closely associated with them was a painter named Ibrahim al-Amidi, whose name suggests a connection with the eastern Anatolian city of Amid or Diyarbakır (James 1988: nos. 31–32, 34–35, 197–200, 204–214). Some of his works contain illuminations in which geometric designs are balanced with delicately executed garlands of profile lotus blossoms and peony blossoms seen from above. These floral accents appear to be of East Asian origin and may reflect an exposure to the patterns used on that region's textiles. Profile lotus blossoms are used in surviving silk textiles of Mamluk date, but the comparable garlands used as a framing device are most closely associated with painted or printed textiles from India in which floral garlands are often used as a framing device (Mackie 1984: pls. 16, 20; Peck 2014: no. 25, pp. 183–184). This use of a wider variety of floral designs along with cloud bands is accompanied by an expansion in the range of colors that gives Mamluk Qurʾans of the 1360s and 1370s an unparalleled richness of execution and links them to the decoration of some religious monuments (James 1988: 178–214).

An isolated frontispiece from a Mamluk Qurʾan now in the Freer Gallery of Art has a rich but subdued color scheme of gold, white, blue, and pink. The page is dominated by a central 12-pointed star that is framed by compass drawn panels filled with highly stylized script and both are surrounded by a lotus and peony garland and other borders. This design shares many features with the most prominent Cairene Qurʾan frontispieces of the 1370s, although its smaller dimensions has resulted in a more compressed composition (Figure 27.2) (nos. 28–30, James 1988: 180–197; Lings 1976: 56, no. 79–81). It is particularly close to the frontispiece from the Qurʾan made for a leading Mamluk, Arghun Shah al-Ashrafi (Atıl 1975: no. 4, pp. 36–37). Its inscribed panels repeat two verses from the Qurʾan (9: 128–129), which extol the Prophet's concern for mankind and conclude with a personal prayer of faith and trust in God, which the reader is enjoined to repeat as a litany.

The study of Mamluk manuscripts has traditionally focused on their physical appearance, but it is also significant that the Qurʾan was central to the region's religious life, especially at institutions that supported Sufi practice. Manuscript production was stimulated by religious practices that stressed its almost continuous recitation, a form of devotion that was particularly prominent among Sufis who inhabited or frequented Cairene *khanaqah*s. At such institutions, it was not uncommon for the Qurʾan to be recited daily in its entirety by a number of individuals, each reciting a specific section of its text. Documents preserved in Jerusalem demonstrate that this form of devotion was also common there in the Mamluk period (Salameh 2001: 42–45). Many manuscript patrons also established religious foundations where the study and recital of the Qurʾan's text was supported by endowments (Fernandes 1988: 27, 29, 65, 67, 74, 77, 79, 80).

Conclusion

Qurʾan manuscripts produced between the mid-thirteenth and the mid-fifteenth centuries can be separated into regional groups based on their adherence to scribal norms. Manuscripts copied and decorated in North Africa and Spain have features that reveal that region's conservatism and adherence to past tradition, but some of the most opulent examples may reflect the taste of local courts for richly colored paper and embellishment with gold. Scribes active in other areas followed calligraphic models developed in Abbasid Baghdad long after the dynasty's demise and in areas far beyond its original boundaries.

The full-page compositions that open and close individual volumes help to link Qurʾan manuscripts with regional, local, or personal artistic preferences. Although the location and design of such pages in Qurʾan manuscripts show broad similarities, they can also be compared to the embellishments used in other types of manuscripts and at times even to other media such as textiles or architectural ornament produced in the same regions and periods.

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28

Locating the Alhambra: A Fourteenth-Century "Islamic" Palace and its "Western" Contexts

Cynthia Robinson

Perched atop Granada's Sabika hill, the Alhambra – *Qasr al-Hamra'* (Red Palace) – became the dynastic seat of the Nasrid dynasty, the last Islamic dynasty to hold significant territory on Iberian soil, in the mid-thirteenth century.[1] It remained so until the defeat of the Nasrids in 1492 at the hands of Christian forces from the newly united kingdoms of Castile and Aragon.[2] Though its structures date from as early as the eleventh century to as late as the fifteenth century, my focus will be the most completely studied of the Alhambra's palaces – those popularly known as the Palaces of Comares and of the Lions, constructed in the fourteenth century, during the reigns of Sultan Yusuf I (1333–1354) and his son Muhammad V (1354–1359; 1362–1391) (see Figure 28.1, Figure 28.2, and Figure 28.3). The Alhambra has attracted the attention of scholars practically since the moment of its construction. It has also been essentialized, trivialized, and commercialized, serving as inspiration for a wide variety of cultural manifestations – from World's Fair pavilions to gambling casinos and fanciful lines of lingerie – with little if any obvious relationship to the palace's original context of production and reception.[3] It seems, in other words, to offer to its "Western" viewers an endless fount of the seductive quintessence of Oriental otherness, which nonetheless proceeds from a place "European" enough to feel familiar.

This apparent contradiction has had a deep impact on its scholarly representation. Although one scholar recently expressed frustration over the interpretative

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slipperiness of the Nasrid palace (Irwin 2004: 15–16), it seems that, at least for some, the veil of Orientalizing mystery is preferable to solid answers.

A fully contextualized study of the entire complex is beyond the scope of this chapter. Rather, my intention is to revisit a number of questions concerning the context, function, and reception of both structural and ornamental elements with the following question in mind: just how "Oriental" *is* the Alhambra?

With the exception of Ruiz Souza (1998, 2001, 2004a), Spanish scholarship presents the Nasrid palace as the culmination of a peninsular, "Hispano-Islamic" tradition, tracing its precedents in Andalusian structures such as the Umayyad royal complex at Madinat al-Zahra', not far from Cordoba, or the palace known as the Aljaferia, built in Zaragoza by its *taifa* kings (rulers of independent kingdoms established following the fall of the Umayyad caliphate) in the eleventh century (Bermúdez 1987; Cabrera *et al.* 2007; Fernández Puertas 2000; Orihuela and López 1990). This line of investigation is a decidedly "Western" one, if we understand the term geographically. It was Oleg Grabar (1992) who, though he also delineated classical and ancient Near Eastern precedents of the Hispano-Islamic" tradition, situated the Alhambra at the later end of a spectrum of palaces built by Muslim patrons throughout the medieval Islamic lands, highlighting features shared with predecessors and contemporaries located in the Mediterranean basin, the Near East, and Iran. Grabar's interpretation of the Nasrid palace, in other words – which had a strong impact on future generations of scholarship[4] – situates it in a derivative relationship to previous and contemporary developments taking place further east.

It is not a given, however, that those who conceived and used the Alhambra adopted "Eastern" models because of their "Easternness." In addition to tropes of power, religiosity, and sovereignty that would have been understood by fourteenth-century Muslim viewers anywhere in the "Islamic world," the Alhambra also engages, on the one hand, the specificities of a Western Islamic, or Maghribi, context and, on the other, the Romance-speaking, Christian-ruled kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula.

An example of this is the Alhambra's insistence on vegetal ornament, which will figure in each of the sections of this chapter. As noted by Grabar (1992: 181) and Necipoğlu and al-Asad (1995: 102, 172), this preference is notably different from the more abstract tastes manifested in contexts further east (see Figure 28.3 and Figure 28.4). It is not, however, indicative of the backward-looking nature of the Nasrid monument. Rather, it is emblematic of a tradition of poetic and visual symbolism which, although it finds its roots in the earliest manifestations of the Arabic poetic tradition (and, thus, in fact, in the East), culminates in expressions of devotion to the Prophet Muhammad and his family that reverberated in a specifically Andalusian–Maghribi context.[5] The Alhambra and its patrons and audiences, in other words, did "look East," but the East toward which they gazed was an imaginary one rooted in the mythical past of an Islam just born. Through an appropriation of the principal places, personalities, and symbolic topoi associated with the lands trodden by the Prophet and the *ansar* (the Prophet's Companions and Helpers), the Nasrids constructed a dynastic identity which they deployed before audiences situated in the western regions of the Dar al-Islam, and in the Christian kingdoms of Aragon and Castile.

The Palace of Comares: Seat for a Western Caliphate

The Palace of Comares (a name of uncertain derivation) is dominated by the enormous tower that houses the throne room commonly known as the "Hall of the Ambassadors," constructed under the patronage of Sultan Yusuf I (Figure 28.1 and Figure 28.2). The hall is essentially a *qubba*, or a centralized, domed space; in its original state, it was a much larger version of the towers that stud the circuit of walls surrounding the Nasrid complex. The Tower of Comares bears notable similarities to the so-called Tower of the Captive, constructed under the patronage of the same sovereign (Bush 2006; Robinson 2011; Ruiz 2013). The remaining structures that compose the Comares complex are owed to the patronage of Muhammad V. These include the "Hall of Baraka," which precedes the throne room; the tiny oratory, tucked between the aforementioned antechamber and the throne room; the courtyard with pool and adjacent structures onto which the throne room opens (popularly known as the "Court of the Myrtles"); the two-storied complex at the opposite end of the courtyard, important parts of which have been replaced by the sixteenth-century palace of the Spanish Habsburg emperor, Charles V, and which originally opened onto the principal throughway connecting the palace to the mosque; the "Cuarto Dorado" (Golden Room) and its adjacent patio, with a pool at its center, which precedes a monumental entrance portal; the *mishwar* (generally understood as a Spanish deformation of the Arabic *mashawar*, or place of counsel), which served official judiciary functions, and its accompanying *musalla*, or oratory; and, finally, the *bahw* (pavilion) known as the "Torre de Machuca," together with the sizable plaza onto which it opens.

Controversy exists concerning the original appearance of the structures at the opposite end of the Court of the Myrtles, as well as the original location of the elaborate portal that opens from the Cuarto Dorado into the throne room. Ruiz Souza (2004a, 2013) has argued for the existence of a triumphal façade – originally including the portal in question – opening onto a *plaza de armas*, similar to the Alcazar Palace (Alcázares Reales) of Seville and the convent-palace of Tordesillas, near Valladolid, both erected by the Castilian sovereign Pedro I (r. 1334–1369), an ally of Muhammad V. Ruiz's arguments place the Nasrid complex in dialogue with monuments rooted in an Iberian – and therefore geographically "Western" – tradition that transcended religious and linguistic divides. Recently discovered poetic inscriptions confirm Ruiz' theory, as does a late fifteenth-century representation of the Alhambra in an altarpiece produced for the main altar of the cathedral of Palencia by Juan de Flandes (Puerta and Nuñez 2010;

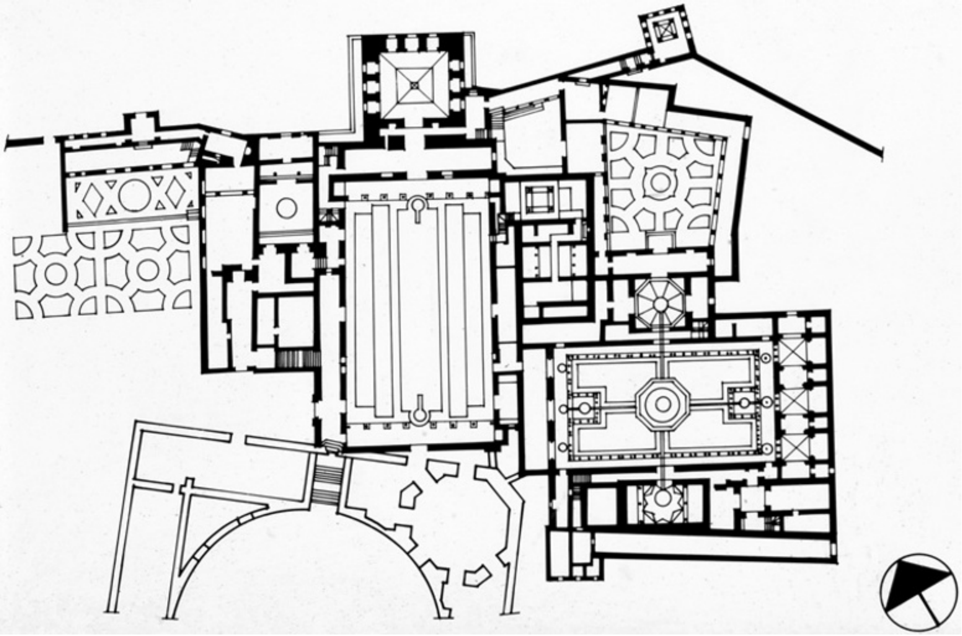

FIGURE 28.1 Plan of the Alhambra, with the Hall of Comares projecting towards the northeast. After Contreras. Source: Courtesy of Aga Khan Visual Archive, MIT. Reproduced with permission.

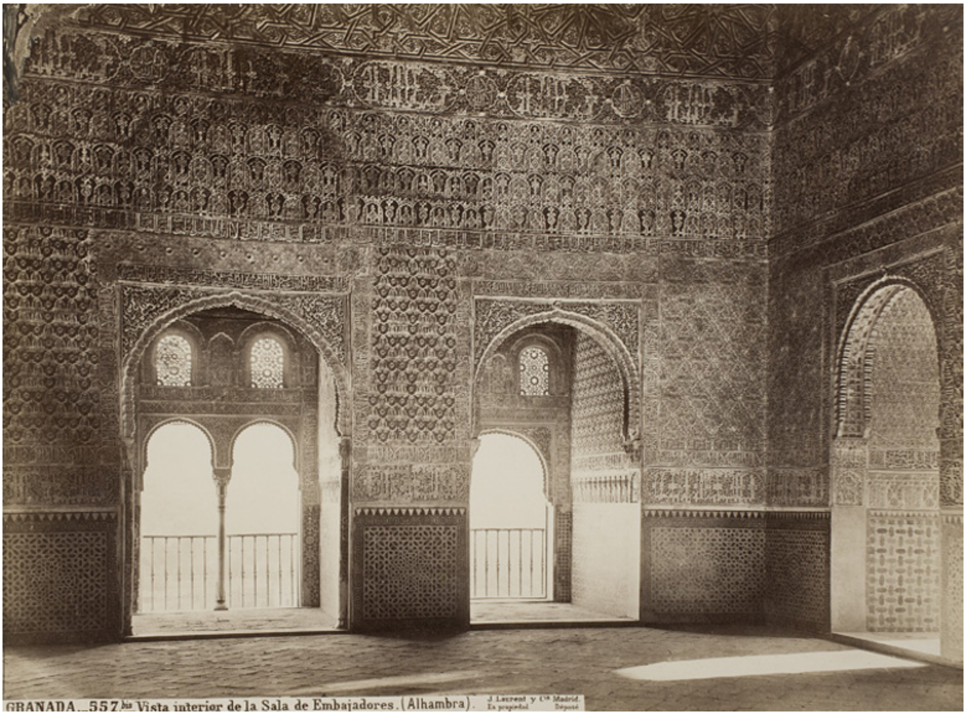
GRANADA._557.bis Vista interior de la Sala de Embajadores. (Alhambra).
J. Laurent y Cia Madrid.
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FIGURE 28.2 Alhambra, Hall of Comares, interior. Source: Photo courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza. Reproduced with permission.

Ruiz 2013). If Ruiz's arguments are upheld (although for contrary views see Fernández Puertas 1983–), these structures, aligned along the principal avenue of the Nasrid complex connecting the Palace of Comares to the mosque and royal burial grounds (*rawda*), together formed an important part of the "public face" and thus of the architectural legitimization of the dynasty.

Though one scholar has insisted on the semantic importance of geometric motifs in the stucco ornament of the initial tower/throne room constructed by Yusuf I (Gonzales 2001), others have observed that this ornament is notably textilic in character (Bush 2006; Robinson 2008a, 2011). Indeed, when we remember that these motifs were originally painted red, green, blue, yellow, and black, with inscriptions highlighted in gold or silver leaf, their similarities to the textiles for which Nasrid workshops were known become even more evident. Vegetal motifs, in this original tower, are largely limited to the spandrels of arches, as though to suggest views of lush vegetation from within a tent erected in a verdant field or garden. They are notably more prominent in the façade of the Hall of Baraka which faces the central courtyard, dating to the second building phase, carried out under Muhammad V (Bush 2006; Robinson 2011). Finally, the Hall of the Ambassadors is topped by an *artesonado* ceiling, composed of wooden strapwork woven into complex star patterns, whose centers originally bore a range of colors similar to those adorning the stucco on the walls below (Cabanelas 1988; Gonzales 2001; Grabar 1992: 118–119; 142–143; Robinson 2011).

Many of Muhammad V's renovations were carried out immediately following his triumphant return from exile at the Marinid court in North Africa in 1362, to a throne he had been forced to abandon only a few years earlier (Bush 2006; Cabrera 2007; Fernández Puertas 1983–, 2000; García Gómez 1988: 92–96; Ruiz Souza 2004a). Successive building phases undertaken under Yusuf I and Muhammad V, along with their accompanying programs of ornament, communicate an image of a Western caliphate, offering settings for displays of power orchestrated to showcase a Nasrid caliph.

Agreement has long existed concerning the function of the Hall of Comares as throne room to sultans Yusuf I and Muhammad V (Bush 2006; García Gómez 1985; Puerta and Nuñez 2010; Ruiz Souza 2004a). Inscriptions, still in situ, offer further confirmation; they are, likewise, indispensable in reconstructing the set of meanings space, ornament, and sovereign were intended to convey. As noted above, the walls of the cubical but spacious and lofty hall are "draped" in swathes of ornamental motifs similar to the colors and patterns that characterized Nasrid textiles, with which this space was also likely hung (Bush 2006; Trillo San José 2002) (see Figure 28.2). From the sovereign's throne, located at the center of the hall, an unobstructed view of pool, gardens, and courtyard (added during the second reign of Muhammad V) opened before him, as did the panoramic spectacle of the city and lands he ruled from the windows punctuating the walls of the throne room (Ruggles 1997).

Through repeated use of celestial imagery and references to key Islamic cosmological concepts, the Qurʾanic and poetic content of the inscriptions invoked a perfectly ordered cosmos with the Nasrid sultan at its center. Above him, the *artesonado* ceiling constituted a representation of the Seven Heavens, among whose celestial bodies, according to Cabanelas (1988), appears the Qurʾanic Lotus Tree of the Boundary (Qurʾan 53:14), from beneath which flow the four rivers of Paradise, and upon which Allah's throne rests. The tree's presence in both heavenly and earthly realms assured a proper degree of separation between divine lord and human sovereign, as well as a metaphorical likeness between the two.

For Cabanelas (and for Nasrid viewers), the Seven Heavens evoked by the ceiling are the spaces through which the Prophet traveled in his visionary *miʿraj* (night voyage), an occasion on which Muhammad, while in prayer at Mecca, was raptured in soul and deposited at the "farthest mosque," which came to be identified with the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. This concept is referenced in verses composed by the Nasrid poet Ibn al-Jayyab and inscribed onto the walls of the Tower of the Captive, also constructed under the patronage of Yusuf I. The sultan's connection to the *Sahib al-miʿraj* (he who undertook the ascent) – that is, to the Prophet himself – was thus emphasized and reinforced through his descent from one of the prophet's helpers, Saʿd ibn Khazraj, which figures prominently in works by Nasrid court apologists (Boloix-Gallardo 2006; Fierro 2006; Robinson 2011; Rubiera 2008). A reading of the ceiling as representative of the Seven Heavens is further cemented by inscriptions including Qurʾan 67, the *Surat al-Mulk*, specifically referencing those heavens, as well as verses composed by Nasrid court poets filled with celestial and light references, clearly conceived to function in intertextual relationship with the words from the holy text (García Gómez 1985: 103–107; Robinson 2008a, 2011).

These motifs are significant in Sufi thought and cosmology, important throughout the Islamic world during the later medieval centuries, and key in the Nasrids' construction of their dynastic identity (Cabanelas 1988; Puerta 1997, 2007; Puerta and Nuñez 2010: 314–315; Robinson 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Robinson and Zomeño 2014). The representation of the Seven Heavens and the Qurʾanic tree, upon which Allah's throne rests, directly above the sultan's head, literally presents the Nasrid sovereign's throne as the point of encounter between created and uncreated realms of existence. The divine throne is central to the cosmological conception preferred by the Nasrid intelligentsia, which allows for the transmission of qualities directly from the deity to his creatures. For the Andalusian Sufi Ibn ʿArabi (d. 1240), for example, Allah's throne (*ʿarsh*) and pedestal (*kursi*), situated at the center of a series of concentric circles, were the motors of creation, transmitters of divine attributes. The divine throne, footstool, and light are referenced in the final line of the anonymous verses that adorn the central alcove of the Hall of Comares (García Gómez 1985: 107–108; Robinson 2011). The space thus proposes itself as a microcosm of the universe, at the center of which the sultan exists, and the principles of which his presence activates.

Textilic references inform yet another semantic register of interpretation for this space. In the verses inscribed into the central alcove of the throne room, of Yusuf I's having draped the chamber in robes of honor (*malabis fakhr*), or allusions to richly embroidered fabrics (*dibaj*) in the verses inscribed around one of the left niches at the entrance (García Gómez 1985: 105–108; Robinson 2011), the entire *qubba* is termed, in the verses surrounding another of the niches, a "lofty tent-pavilion not sustained by cords" (*shahiqatan … la yumadad laha tunub*) (García Gómez 1985: 100–101). As noted by numerous scholars, the *qubba*, when manifested as permanent architecture, has multifaceted connections to the ceremonial tents erected using priceless textiles for military, celebratory, and commemorative purposes dating back to pre-Islamic times (Bush 2006: 340–360). The potential semantic field of such an allusion in the Nasrid throne room ranges from military might and triumph to an intimate space for the encounter of mystical lover and beloved. One controversial early Syrian hadith even recounts an encounter in a tent-pavilion between the Prophet and Allah that occurred in Jerusalem at the time of the *miʿraj*, during which the deity revealed himself to Muhammad seated on his throne, a theme which would resonate with above-described references to the same event couched elsewhere in the space (Robinson 2011). Within his literal representation of a celestial tent-pavilion, then, the Nasrid sovereign was ideally placed for the reception of divine emanations, which he would in turn reflect.

Most, if not all, of the concepts explored in the preceding paragraphs are articulated, in one form or another, in most, if not all, palaces built by medieval Muslim sovereigns, as well as in some late antique and medieval ones. One could argue, as Grabar (1992: 99–115) did – proposing comparisons with Spalato (Split), Cairo, Aleppo, Istanbul, and Tabriz – that the Nasrid complex is most effectively read in light of these other structures. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the specific historical and cultural context of the Alhambra.

As noted earlier, the Nasrids traced their lineage back to one of the *ansar*, Saʿd ibn Khazraj, scion of a tribe whose ancestral home was Yemen. These claims are made repeatedly in chronicles and prosopographical collections patronized by the dynasty, appearing on royal epitaphs, in panegyric verse, as well as in inscriptions on the palace walls, beginning with Ismaʿil I (r. 1279–1325) (Boloix-Gallardo 2006; Fierro 2006; Lirola 2002; Robinson 2011, 2013, forthcoming; Robinson and Zomeño 2014; Rubiera 2008). Rubiera (2008) also notes a relevant inscription in the Generalife, or *Jinnat al-ʿArif* (The Architect's Garden, a summer complex located up the hill to the northeast) dating to the early fourteenth century. Early histories of the pre-Umayyad period state that Saʿd ibn Khazraj was determined by consensus of the *ansar* to be the most appropriate candidate to succeed the Prophet; thus, the Nasrids could claim descent from the *khulafaʾ al-rashidun* (rightly guided caliphs), the first four caliphs of Islam, and thus to be rulers of a caliphate (Fierro 2006; Rubiera 2008). As Rubiera (2008) observes, other late medieval dynasties made similar assertions, none claiming the caliphal title of *amir* *al-muʾminin* (Amir of the Muslims) as the Umayyads and Almohads had done. Thus, it cannot be inferred that the Nasrids' gestures were executed with an audience in mind that included the entirety of the Dar al-Islam.

Nonetheless, they were likely intended for a public a great deal larger than the exclusively "in-house" one imagined by Rubiera (2008: 298–299): the Marinid dynasty made similar claims, which the Nasrids certainly intended to rival, or even to trump. Had the Nasrid dynasty's trajectory not been curtailed by the 1492 conquest, it would likely have developed along lines similar to North African dynasties of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with Mahdism (belief in messianic leadership) and direct descent from the Prophet constituting prerequisites for political power and legitimacy (Cornell 1998; García-Arenal 2006).

In fact, many of the additions patronized by Muhammad V to the original *qubba/qalahurra* (tower) structure served as a setting for displays of power designed to articulate the concepts examined in the preceding paragraphs and to insinuate, through a sophisticated manipulation of visual and poetic tropes and symbols, if not direct descent from, then, at the very least a strong and intimate relationship between the Nasrid dynasty and the family of the Prophet (Robinson 2011, 2013, forthcoming; Robinson and Zomeño 2014). A text by Ibn al-Khatib (1313–1374) details a celebration of the *mawlid* (the Prophet's birthday), held at the Alhambra on 12 *Rabiʿ al-thani* 764 (30 December 1362). Departing from García Gómez's classic study (1985), Orihuela and López (1990) and more recently Bush (2006) have localized the events related in the minister's text in the halls and courtyards between the *mishwar* and the Hall of Comares (Bush 2006: 331–340; Orihuela and López 1990; Ruiz Souza 2004a). Bush has suggested that these festivities culminated, for certain celebrants, in the reception of ceremonial greetings from the sultan seated in state in the tower known today as the Torre de Machuca, separated from the courtyard onto which it opens by a lavish tent erected for the occasion, described in some detail by Ibn al-Khatib.

Though they likely originated in Egypt and Syria during the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods (del Moral and Velásquez Basanta 1994; Makkī 1991), lavish *mawlid* celebrations, as well as the panegyric verses composed to commemorate them, known as *mawludiyyat*, were especially assiduously cultivated in Western Islamic lands, with the majority of surviving *mawludiyyat* composed at Hafsunid, Marinid, and Nasrid courts in the mid-fourteenth century (Kaptein 1993; Salmī 1956). Although arguably fashioned after Marinid celebrations, Muhammad V's 1362 *mawlid* activated precisely *these* spaces and their ornament, in a display of dynastic power and legitimacy. Direct and repeated claims were made to the status of caliph on the part of the sovereign in the *madih* (praise) sections of numerous of the 25 lengthy panegyric compositions recited on the occasion (Robinson 2017, forthcoming; Robinson and Zomeño 2014).

Ibn al-Khatib's narration indicates that the audience present on the occasion was composed of members of the royal family; representatives of powerful Sufi confraternities, who performed *dhikr* (lit. "memory of God," usually in the form of short phrases chanted in repetition) and ritual dance at the sovereign's behest; members of the family of the Prophet, identified – somewhat curiously – as the *Banu al-Fawatim* (tribe of the two Fatimas); sundry members of the court; high-ranking Christians; and a number of Maghribi religious authorities and literati, among them the historian Ibn Khaldun (del Moral and Velásquez Basanta 1994; García Gómez 1985; Makkī 1991; Robinson 2011, 2013, forthcoming; Robinson and Zomeño 2014). The public was, in other words, a decidedly "Western" one, in geographical terms.

The symbolic vocabulary of the *mawludiyyat* proceeds directly from the repertoire of tropes and metaphors of classical Arabic poetry: abandoned desert camps haunted by the beloved's phantom; vegetation native to the lands of the Prophet's birth; night journeys on fleet steeds; deserts blooming after savage summer storms; blinding lightning and echoing thunder (del Moral and Velásquez Basanta 1994; Makkī 1991; Robinson 2011, 2013, forthcoming; Robinson and Zomeño 2014). They invoke, in other words, the poetics of the *muʿallaqat* (Hanging Odes), celebrated poems from pre-Islamic Arabia (Sells 1989). These compositions, by the time of Muhammad V's *mawlid* celebration, had been mined many times over for metaphors deployed for mystical purposes; the novelty in the fourteenth century is that a symbolic vocabulary of light and desert flora was habitually used in Sufi contexts to evoke and praise the Prophet (Schimmel 1985: 123–143 and notes, 290–294).

An important component of the ephemeral *mise-en-scène* deployed by Muhammad V was the ceremonial tent from which he witnessed the celebration. The tent was placed between the Torre de Machuca and a pond, around which was arranged an array of brass and crystal lighting devices, many fashioned in imitation of trees (García Gómez 1985; Robinson 2017, forthcoming). Ibn al-Khatib's description evokes

> a tent amid desert dunes suddenly in bloom, mirages reflected in puddles left by the rain, illuminated by flashes of lightening clearly intended to invoke the Prophet. The Nasrid court, in other words, through a process of poetic *translatio* involving the deployment of a symbolic vocabulary rooted in vegetal and light symbolism, "became" the poetic landscape of early Islam, which witnessed the life and miracles of the Prophet and the deeds of his companions. (Robinson 2017, forthcoming)

Ibn al-Khatib also notes that, as a result of poetic declamations punctuated by spontaneous eruptions of *dhikr*, many of those present attained states of mystical ecstasy. An important component of the Nasrids' display of power thus included the patronage and control of the very devotional current most potentially threatening to the dynasty's religious legitimacy. By appropriating the vegetation- and light-centered symbolic vocabulary of Sufi devotions centered around the person of the Prophet, the Nasrids abrogated a portion of the attending *baraka* (blessings) for themselves (Robinson 2011, 2013 forthcoming; Robinson and Zomeño 2014).

Al-Riyad al-Saᶜid: Garden of Knowledge

The adjacent "Palace of the Lions" offers an entirely different world (see Figure 28.1, Figure 28.3, and Figure 28.4). Oriented east–west, in the opposite direction to the static, imposing Palace of Comares, movement around the perimeter of its central courtyard is invited by the graceful columns placed in alternating groups of two, three, and four. At the midpoint of the long sides are large, densely ornamented rooms of uncertain purpose, topped by complex *muqarnas* domes. On the short sides, pavilions – composed of stucco screens consisting of architectural and vegetal motifs, perforated in order to allow the penetration of sun- or moonlight – jut forward toward a fountain flanked by a ring of crouching lions, for which the palace is known.

The central patio would either have been occupied by a sunken quadripartite garden (Ruggles 1997), or been paved with white marble similar to that recently put in place, reflecting what Ruiz argues to have been its original state (Ruiz 2001). As Puerta (2001) proposes, this highly reflective surface declares, through invocations of the Qurʾanic parable concerning a glass floor built by King Solomon for the reception of the Queen of Sheba (Qurʾan: 27: 44), its likeness compared to a shimmering sea; the theme is explicitly invoked on the poetic inscriptions of the "Mirador de la Daraxa," a small pavilion located to the north of the court.

Alhough Grabar's influential study placed the Palace of the Lions in dialogue with Islamic precedents rooted in the classical past (1992: 159–166), Ruiz insists on a Western (both Maghribi and peninsular) context, comparing the Nasrid palace to contemporary structures erected by Marinid, Hafsunid, and Castilian monarchs (Ruiz 1998, 2001). Proposals concerning the function of the Palace of the Lions range from the unfounded and frivolous – "pleasure palace" and harem – to the more serious (though misguided) – summer palace, new throne room, victory palace, and failed attempt to replicate a Roman villa (Fernández Puertas 2000; García Gómez 1985; Grabar 1992: 77–90, 144–154; Irwin 2004).

Ruiz (2001) has proposed that the structure was originally intended as a madrasa conceived, among other purposes, for the teaching of Sufism (classified as a science at Granada's earlier public madrasa), a *zawiya* (saint's shrine), and a burial place for Muhammad V. While the third component must remain in the realm of conjecture unless further proof comes to light, I accept Ruiz's reading of the palace's plan as strongly influenced by Maghribi madrasas such as Bou ʿInaniya, in Fez (1350–1357) and the earlier Dar al-Makhzan (see O'Kane, CHAPTER 23); one thinks also of the Sufi shrine to Abu Madyan at Tlemcen (Blair 1990; Ruiz 2001: 86–89).

During their exile in North Africa, both Muhammad V and his minister Ibn al-Khatib, a practicing Sufi and an authority on the subject (despite efforts to downplay this aspect of his intellectual activity) (Lirola 2002; Santiago 1983), certainly visited such Marinid establishments. While Ruiz's theory may be refined and revisited, it sheds new and often convincing light on a number of features that have puzzled scholars for decades.

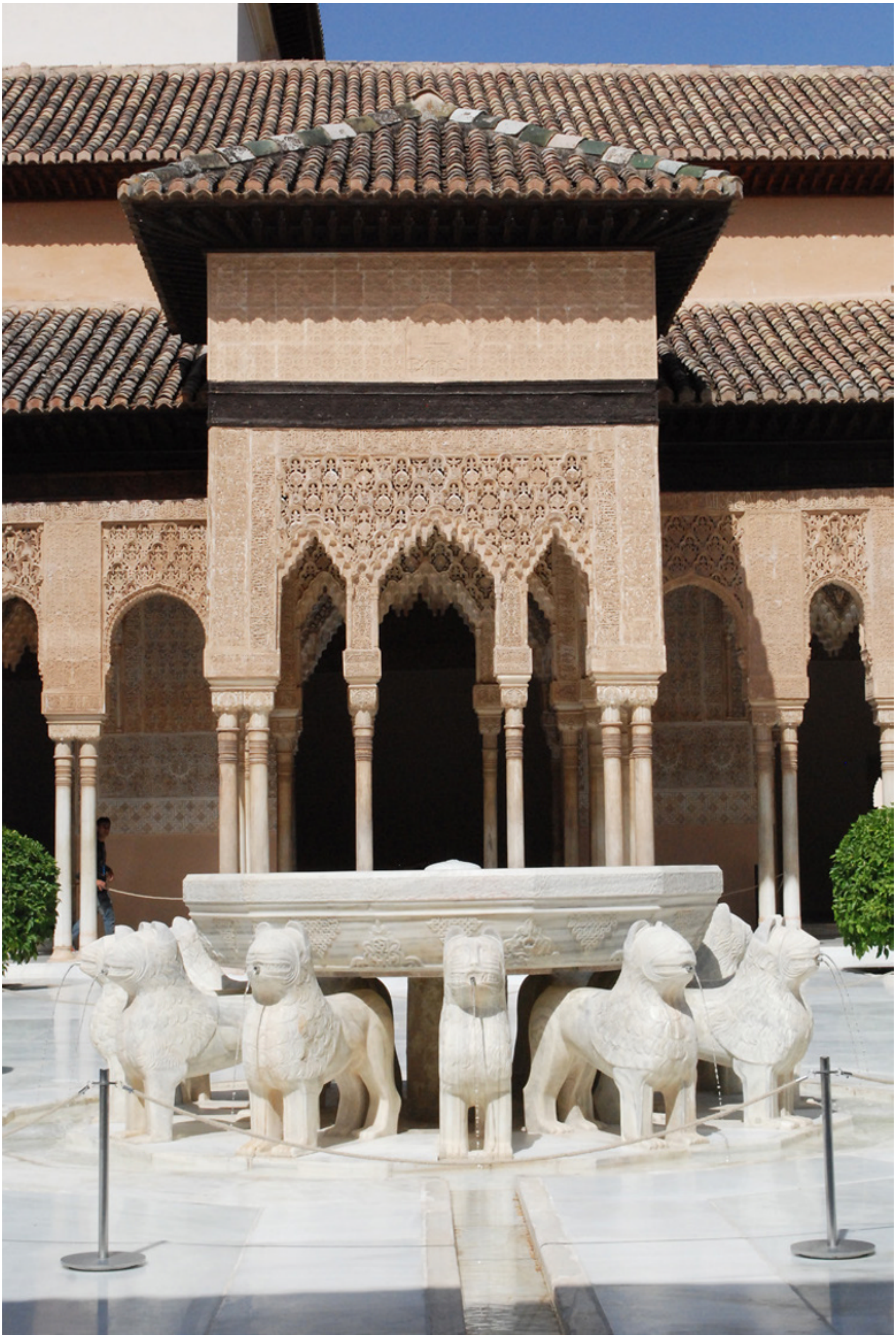

Figure 28.3 Alhambra, Palace of the Lions, courtyard. Source: Photo courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza. Reproduced with permission.

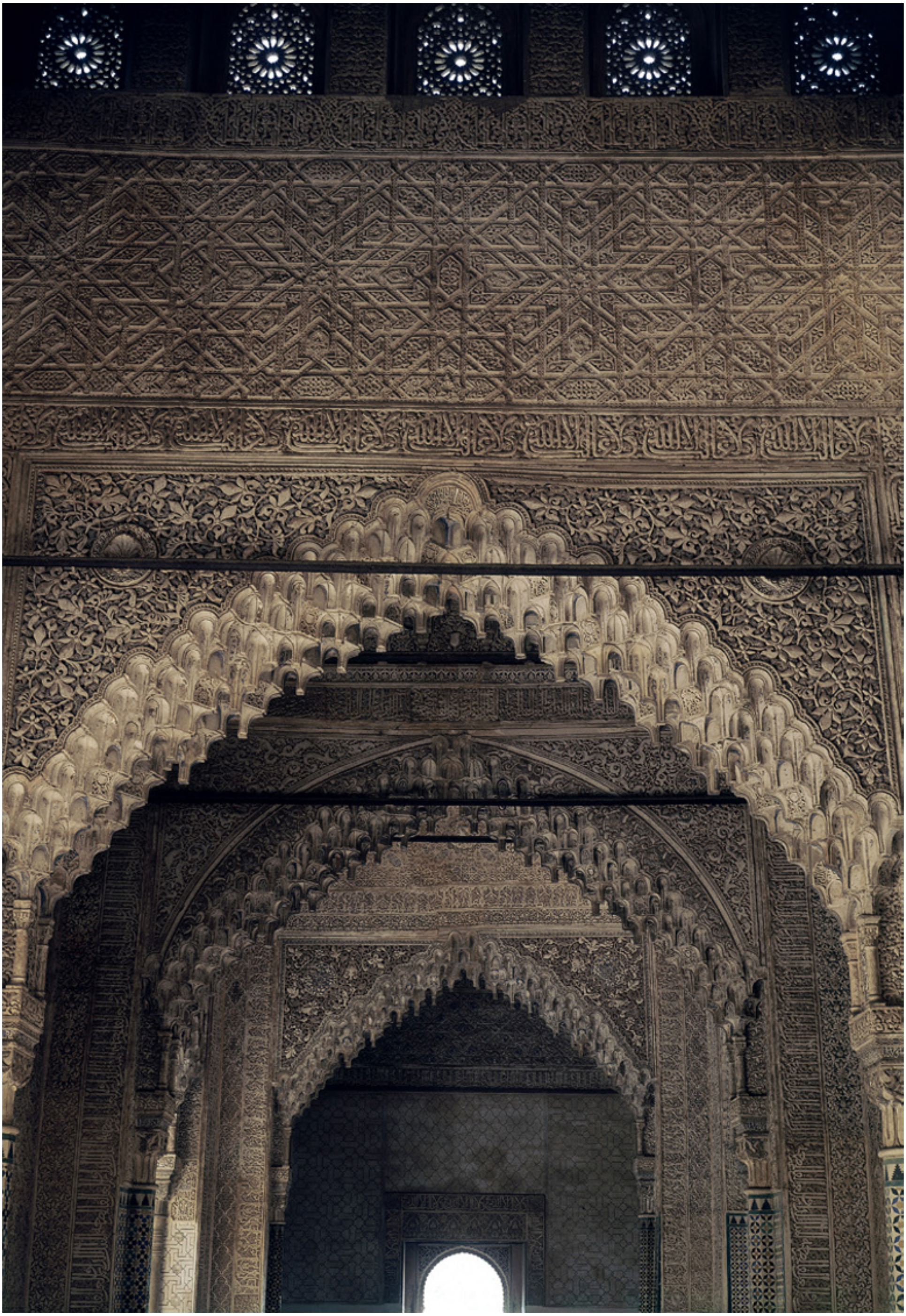

Figure 28.4 Alhambra, Palace of the Lions, Hall of Justice, ornament. Source: Photo courtesy of Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza. Reproduced with permission.

If it is difficult for some to accept the palace's identification as an "official" madrasa, we might at least entertain the possibility of it having functioned as a sort of *bayt al-hikma* (palace school) – a series of spaces, conceived to serve (perhaps among other functions) as a setting for education, contemplation, and intellectual and cultural activities, with an audience conceived primarily as an exclusively royal and noble one. Such an interpretation is not at odds with the readings that emphasize representations of dynastic legitimacy: as argued by Fierro (2006), Puerta (1997), Robinson and Zomeño (2014), and others, Sufism was intimately connected to the upper echelons of dynastic power throughout the Islamic world during the period in question, and the construction of a building or complex to house an institution in which its teachings were propagated would constitute an emphatic statement of royal authority. In any case, Ruiz has demonstrated strong links between the Palace of the Lions and North Africa in particular: it is a thoroughly "Western" Islamic structure.

The corpus of verse inscribed into the palace's walls is essential to its interpretation, including its program of ornament (García Gómez 1985; Grabar 1992; Puerta 1990, 1997, 2007; Puerta and Nuñez 2010; Robinson 2008a). This latter is composed of architectural elements (diminutive columns and arches that perform no structural function), geometric motifs, and, most significantly, vegetal elements, often of striking naturalism (see Figure 28.3 and Figure 28.4).

Allusions to leafy trees and flowering plants abound: motifs composing the perforated stucco screens bordering the courtyard oscillate between the vegetal and the textilic, at times suggesting similarities between the columns that uphold them and tree trunks, while the arcades that punctuate the passageway preceding the "Hall of Justice" are draped in flowering branches. Each of the thousands of facets composing the two *muqarnas* domes atop the "Hall of the Two Sisters" and the "Hall of the Abencerrajes" bears a diminutive floral or vegetal motif, while, in those same spaces, the foliage occupying spandrels of arches surrounding windows and doorways, or nestling between swathes of geometric compositions evocative of textiles, create the illusion of tents composed of stars or flowers, upheld again by slender columns which might easily double as tree trunks.

Such sustained visual allusion to flowering plants, trees, and branches is hardly accidental. Puerta has reminded us of the name by which the structure was known to its original public: *al-Riyad al-Saʿid* (Garden of Delights) (Puerta 2001: 78, n. 12). In both visual and poetic terms, the palace proclaims itself a garden. In the same way that the Hall of Comares constitutes a cosmological representation with the Nasrid sultan at its center, the *Riyad al-Saʿid* embodies a Paradise-garden cosmos composed of a series of smaller gardens, which exist in allegorical relationship both to one another and to the larger, cosmological concept (Robinson 2008a).

How are these conceptual gardens constructed? Puerta's close readings of the verses of Ibn al-Khatib and Ibn Zamrak have pointed to a Nasrid poetics based in an aesthetic of plants, flowers, light, and mirroring, with roots in both Sufism (with neo-Platonic reminiscences) and Islamic interpretations of Aristotelian thought. These qualities are, likewise, personified in the architecture itself (Puerta 1990, 1997, 2001, 2007; Puerta and Nuñez 2010). Indeed, the poem that surrounds the Hall of the Two Sisters, where the sovereign sat and gazed out over the patio, declares:

> I am the garden that noble beauty adorns –
> Oh, how many delights does it offer to our gazes!
> The desires and pleasures of the noble are continually renewed here …
> (García Gómez 1985: no. 14, 115–199; my English translation, here
> and elsewhere unless otherwise indicated)

This affirmation is echoed by the inscriptions surrounding the niches at the entrance to the hall – "I am not alone: my garden has worked such wonders that no eye before has ever seen its likeness" (García Gómez 1985: no. 17, 124); by the frame around the windows that give onto the "Lindaraja" (Aisha's Garden) – "I am the fresh eye of this garden, and its pupil, most certainly, is the sultan Muhammad" (García Gómez 1985: no. 17, 124); as well as by the fountain at the center of the patio: "Are there not wonders and marvels in this garden?" (García Gómez 1985: no. 13, 111–113). Likewise, the poem surrounding the Hall of the Two Sisters ends with the following assertion: "Never did we see such a pleasingly verdant garden, of sweeter harvest or perfume" (García Gómez 1985: no. 14, 115–119).[6] In Islam, as is well known, Paradise is a flowering, verdant, fruit-laden garden – paradisiac associations are, likewise, implicit.[7]

The verses inscribed in the Hall of the Two Sisters also make clear that this is a wondrous garden, composed of silks from Yemen, arches and columns, marble smooth and diaphanous as pearls:

> Oh, what raiment of embroidered stuff have you thrown about it! It makes
> one forget the tulle of Yemen! …
> Her columns are so beautiful in every aspect that word of their fame has reached
> far and wide!
> Her smooth, diaphanous marble brightens the farthest corners darkened by shadow …
> (García Gómez 1985: no. 14, 115–119)

The *Riyad al-Saʿid*'s ornamental program makes similar claims, proposing the identification of trunks with columns, leafy boughs with arcades, and flowering plants with domes.

Taken together, these elements compose, as Ibn al-Khatib states in the rhymed-prose introduction to his treatise on poetry and bewitchment, a "world garden" (Robinson 2008a). Others of Ibn al-Khatib's works, however, such as the *Rawdat al-taʿrif fi-l-hubb al-sharif* (The Garden of Knowledge of Noble Love) – a study of Sufi history, devotional practice, and admonitions composed in a prose that echoes the symbolic vocabulary of the poetry discussed above – suggest a mystical dimension latent in the palace's semantic repertoire, closely linking the Palace of the Lions with the activation of the Palace of Comares during Muhammad V's *mawlid* celebration (Robinson 2006a, 2006b, 2008a, 2008b, 2015, forthcoming).

Courtliness, Contacts, and *Mudéjar*

Nasrid culture existed in inevitable contact with the Christian courts of Aragon and, especially, Castile. The Nasrid court made a series of alliances (mostly of convenience) with Castilian sovereigns, the conditions for which were spelled out in a new treaty each time there was a new occupant of either throne (Viguera *et al.* 2000). Indeed, in many ways, the Nasrid kingdom owed its continued existence to these relationships which, yet again, make clear that the context most relevant to the Alhambra's interpretation is – in purely geographical terms – a "Western" one.

Scholarship has analyzed the manifestation of these relationships in Nasrid visual culture in two principal arenas: first, the ceiling paintings atop the three small rooms that compose the Hall of Justice in the Palace of the Lions (see Figure 28.5), deemed to manifest "Gothic" or "European" "influence" owing to their style (Bermúdez 1987; Dodds 1979; Pinet and Robinson 2008), and second, the category of buildings and programs of ornament commonly termed *mudéjar*, that is, monuments built under Christian or Jewish patronage deemed to evidence "Islamic influence" (Dodds, Krasner, and Menocal 2008: 241–263, 309–311, 323–329; Feliciano, Robinson, and Rouhi 2006; Robinson 2011; Ruiz Souza 2004b).

The Hall of Justice ceilings are adorned with European-style castles and fountains set in clearings amid flowering trees, rivers and thick grass, occupied by a variety of birds and animals, serving as a backdrop to scenes of hunting, tribute, jousts, trysts, and chess, in which figure both Muslim and Christian courtiers (identified by costume) and a blonde Lady accompanied in one scene by her maid and in another by a sleeping lion.

Despite the documented presence of the technique of painting on leather in early Islamic architecture (Bermúdez 1987; Dodds 1979), many scholars read the paintings as "foreign" to the "Islamic" aesthetic of the Alhambra, curiosities alien to the semantic program of the Nasrid palace (Grabar 1992: 79–83; Gonzales 2001: 47). The narrative potential of the images has been denied (according to Dodds, they represent episodes from French versions of Arthurian tales misinterpreted by both patrons and artists), and scholarship has focused, despite the lack of surviving documentation, on the ethnic or confessional identity of the painters: for Dodds, they were *mudéjars* in the service of Castilian sovereign Pedro I, "on loan" to Muhammad V; for Bermúdez they were Italian (Bermúdez 1987; Dodds 1979).

Recent scholarship, however, has attempted to reintegrate the paintings into the broader symbolic and ideological program of the palace, taking into consideration the overriding importance of Sufism in Nasrid culture and, in many cases, accepting Ruiz's proposal, according to which the Hall of Justice would have been the madrasa's library (Pinet and Robinson 2008). Narrative intent has been returned to the scenes, which have been argued to represent the Castilian versions of *Floire et Blanchefleur* and *Tristan and Isolde*, with the endings altered to suit the exigencies of the Nasrid court, as well as elements of early Arab love stories, such as *Majnun Leyla*, and possibly heroic legends surrounding ʿAli, in which case the Lady would also reference Fatima, his wife and the Prophet's daughter

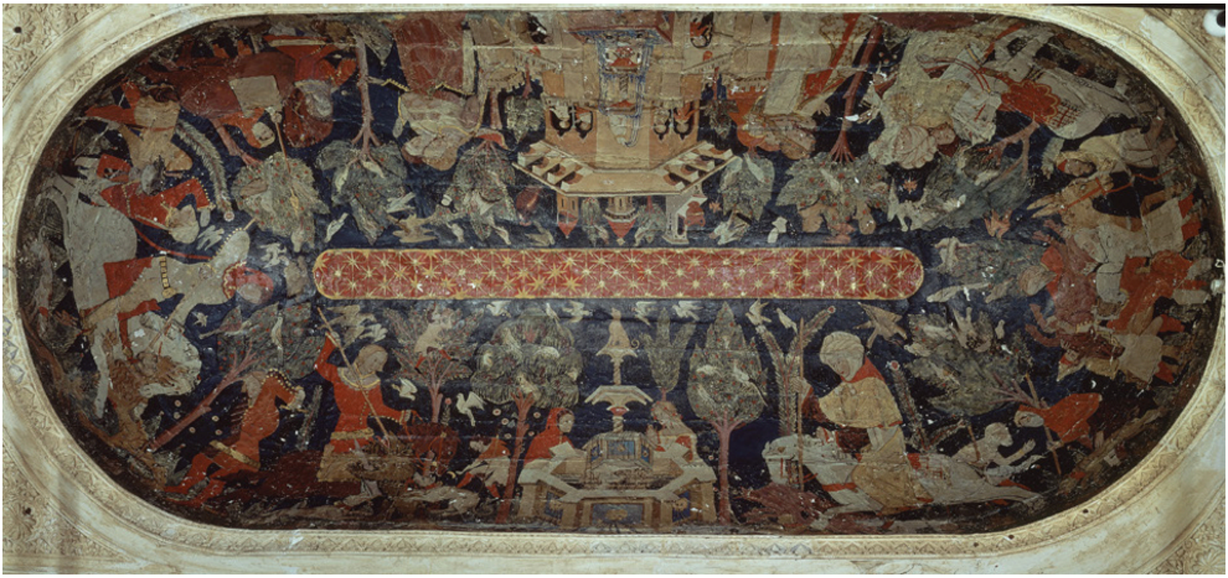

Figure 28.5 Alhambra, Palace of the Lions, Hall of Justice, painted ceiling with courtly images. Source: Courtesy of Patronato de la Alhambra. Reproduced with permission.

(Robinson 2008b, 2012). Likewise, ascetic and moralizing symbolism has been proposed for the birds and animals occupying the margins, placing these images in dialogue with European bestiaries (Borland 2008).

For Porto (2008), these paintings partake of a porous and shifting vocabulary of courtliness proceeding from a language of chivalry employed by a variety of courts throughout the high and late Middle Ages, across ethnic and confessional boundaries, to articulate royal identity and further political interests. She argues that, if we limit our attention to style, often linked too closely to ethnic or confessional origins, we fail to perceive the creative uses and reuses of these elements in ongoing, and seemingly contradictory, processes of cultural negotiation.

Other ornamental elements found throughout the Alhambra complex suggest that the palace and its patrons participated in these sorts of dialogues on a number of fronts. One thinks of the poorly preserved wall-paintings in the earlier "Palace of the Partal," next to the Palace of the Lions (Mehrez 1951) whose "Islamic" style contrasts with that of the Hall of Justice paintings, but which undoubtedly addressed similar concerns at a different historical moment. Likewise, the "Gothic"-style courtly figures adorning floor tiles in the tower known as the "Peinador de la Reina" (Patronato de la Alhambra 1995: 369–370) coexisted in the Nasrid *imaginaire* with the quintessentially "Islamic" symbolic vocabulary of the famous "Alhambra vases," covered with a dense fabric of floral and vegetal motifs, amid which graze gazelles, eternal symbol of the beloved, well known to Arab love poets since the days of the *muʿallaqat* (Torres Ruiz and Villafranca 2007). All of these motifs have also been argued to communicate mystical and devotional meanings, incorporating concepts of courtly love and chivalry, depending on the contexts in which they were deployed (Robinson 2011, 2012, 2015, forthcoming).

Focus on style has similarly limited discussions of the relationship between the Nasrid palace and so-called *mudéjar* architecture and ornament to questions of "stylistic appropriation" as statements of dominance and submission, and "taste" (Dodds, Krasner, and Menocal 2008: 241–263, 309–311, 323–329; see also Cummins and Feliciano, CHAPTER 28). Ruiz (2000, 2006, 2013), however, has explored the complex negotiations of languages of power between Nasrid and Castilian constructions. Other scholars have begun to examine *mudéjar* ornamental vocabulary, not as "Islamic art appropriated by Christians or Jews," but rather as the product of an ongoing process of iteration and reiteration receiving important input from all participant parties, resulting in a visual language which, despite being an aniconic one, was used in the articulation of a wide range of aesthetic, devotional, and polemical content (Robinson 2006a, 2006b, 2011; Ruiz 2013).

Directions for Further Research

Before the Alhambra may truly be understood, much work remains to be done concerning Nasrid religious and court culture (Robinson and Zomeño 2014). Comparative work should be undertaken, likewise, on a multidisciplinary front, in order to understand how Nasrid culture interacted with, and compares to, other centers of power throughout the late medieval Islamic world, with emphasis on North Africa (itself still poorly understood), Mamluk Egypt, Syria, Anatolia, and Iran. Monographic studies are also needed concerning the other few Nasrid monuments that remain – the Alcázar Genil, the Cuarto de Santo Domingo, and the Palacio Dar el-Hurra, all located in Granada. Finally, in order to gain a more complete idea of the built environment of which the Alhambra formed part, there may be much to glean from a careful [re-]reading of Nasrid-period sources, as well as those pertaining to the years just following the Christian conquest, such as the *Libros de Habices* (records of endowments, similar to *waqfiyya*) (Villanueva Rico 1961; 1966), which detail the properties possessed by the various religious entities now administered by the Crown and the Catholic Church.

Notes

1 For an introduction to the Alhambra, see Cabrera *et al.* 2007; Fernández Puertas 2000; Grabar 1992; Puerta 1990, esp. introduction. For inscriptions, see García Gómez 1985 and Puerta 2010.
2 For further reading on the Nasrids, Boloix-Gallardo 2006 and Viguera 2000 both offer extensive bibliographies.
3 For Orientalist readings of the Alhambra, see the final chapter of Irwin 2004.
4 Acknowledged, for example, in the introduction to Puerta 1990.
5 For a more complete development of the argument, see Robinson 2017.
6 García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, no. 14, 115–119.
7 Qurʾanic evocations of Paradise gardens are numerous. Among them are Qurʾan 9:81, 26:85, 56:11, 56:89, 70:36, and 76:20. Puerta ("El vocabulario estético," 8, n. 11) notes that Qurʾan 36:34 appears in the northwest corner of the Generalife's Patio de la Acequia.

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29

Architectural Patronage and the Rise of the Ottomans

Zeynep Yürekli

The two centuries that followed the defeat of the Seljuqs of Rum to the Mongols in 1243 saw the rise of the fortunes of numerous upstart amirs (Turkish sing. *beg* or *bey*) in Anatolia. Muslim historians referred to them as *muluk al-tawaʾif*, the same phrase that they used for the strikingly similar contemporary period of Iberia (Kafadar 1995: 20–22). Modern Turkish historiography has defined this fragmentary phase of Muslim rule in Anatolia as the emirate or principality (*beylik*) period. Many of the *beylik*s had a dynastic succession; some short-lived, some a little more enduring, and one, namely that of the Turkmen warrior ʿOsman Ghazi (d. 1326), so successful in military terms that his descendants would sweep the Anatolian peninsula clear of all the other Muslim and Christian polities by the turn of the sixteenth century, and establish the monarchical Ottoman Empire that would survive centuries of clashes, though not World War I.

Ottoman architectural history before the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 would be incomplete without the broader framework of the *beylik*s. This is not only because the Ottomans eventually appropriated the architectural heritage of the polities they conquered (and this of course includes the Byzantine Empire as well as the *beylik*s) but also because craftsmen, and with them techniques and ideas, traveled across political boundaries. From the unassuming, pragmatic buildings of the time of the second dynastic ruler Orhan (r. 1326–1362), when his *beylik* occupied an area barely the size of Switzerland, to the sultanic mosques in Constantinople/Istanbul built after Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481) achieved a complete takeover of the Byzantine Empire by 1461, the story of Ottoman architecture is multifaceted. It is not just one of architectural forms evolving towards greater monumentality, commensurately with the size of the

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expanding territories, but also one of people from vastly diverse backgrounds who were involved as patrons, architects, craftsmen, and workers. In this chapter, early Ottoman architecture is explored from the perspective of a few recurrent themes in scholarship: continuity and change from Byzantine to fourteenth-century Ottoman constructions, a paradigm shift that occurred at the end of the fourteenth century, and the role of actual people (in particular, patrons and craftsmen) in introducing to Ottoman architectural culture foreign modes from the Timurid and Mamluk lands.

Historiography

Because of the importance of the Turkmen *beylik*s within the national history of the lands that constituted the modern Turkish Republic, considerable attention has been paid to this period by Turkish historians. Under the late Ottoman nationalist Union and Progress party (1908–1918) and the early decades of the Republic (1923–), when the interests of official historiography shifted from "Ottoman" to "Turkish," the *beylik*s began to be studied in their own right (Ahmed Tevhid 1910–1912; Eldem 1926; Köprülü 1928; Uzunçarşılı 1937). As with anything else, being grounded in official historiography presented practical advantages as well as conceptual challenges to the study of *beylik* architecture.

Sandwiched between the glories of the Seljuqs of Rum (1077–1307) and of the Ottoman Empire, the architectural achievements of this period are relatively modest in scale and quite heterogeneous in terms of plan types, construction techniques, and decorative modes. Inevitably, their incorporation into broadly framed narratives has been clumsy. Rubrics such as "Islamic," "Turkish," and "Ottoman" impose unfair limitations on the cultural history of such a multidenominational, multiethnic, and politically fragmented region as late medieval Anatolia. General surveys of Islamic art and architecture rarely accommodate the buildings of the relatively short-lived Turkmen and Mongol dynasties of Anatolia (as in Blair and Bloom 1995: 132–148). This is a reflection of the indigenous scholarship on late medieval Anatolia that general surveys have had to rely on. Lopsided in favor of the Ottomans, modern Turkish scholarship has offered their Anatolian contemporaries only a marginal place.

Early Ottoman buildings in Bursa, the first Ottoman capital, were made an integral part of the late Ottoman discourse on architectural heritage in the *Fundamentals of Ottoman Architecture (Usuli Miʿmari-i ʿOsmani)*, a display-size book published on the occasion of the 1873 World Exhibition in Vienna (De Launay *et al.* 1873; Ersoy 2007). The later chief architect of the Ministry of Warfare Kemal (a.k.a. Miʿmar Kemaleddin) challenged what he perceived in this book as a superficial approach to the elements of architecture, but not the importance of the same buildings in the architectural heritage of the empire (Kemal 1324 AH/1906–1907). In fact, he argued that they should be made a part of the discourse of Islamic architecture, which he thought depended too heavily on Arab architecture. Unsurprisingly, given the imperial undercurrent, the buildings of the other *beylik*s were entirely absent from the discussions of architectural heritage. They failed to attract attention even when Ottomanness was out of fashion and Turkishness was in. The earliest surveys of Turkish art (Arseven 1928; Diez 1946), written at a time of growing interest in the history of the *beylik*s, skip over their architectural heritage with the exception of the early Ottomans. These surveys, born out of a long-term alliance between the formalist Vienna school of art history and Turkish nationalist historiography (Kuban 1969; Pancaroğlu 2007), laid the foundations for the standard narrative of Turkish art from pre-Islamic Central Asia to the Ottoman classical age. It was only from the 1960s onwards that the *beylik*s assumed a standard position in Turkish scholarship between the Seljuqs of Rum and the Ottomans (see Necipoğlu 2007: 174). *Beylik* buildings, seen as providing the link from Seljuq to Ottoman architecture (Yetkin 1955 and later works), were introduced by Aslanapa (1971 and later works), a student of the Austrian art historian Ernst Diez (d. 1961), into the established Central-Asia-to-Anatolia narrative of Turkish art.

The second part of the twentieth century saw a rising number of narratives concerning Ottoman architecture by Turkish scholars. Even when the focus was on the classical era after the conquest of Constantinople, early Ottoman buildings were studied in great detail and compiled in extensive catalogues (Ayverdi 1966, 1972; Kuran 1964, 1968). The settlement patterns and buildings of the other *beylik*s were largely beyond the scope of these studies. They were, however, examined separately in comparable detail (Doğay 1967, in the first instance, and later works). For the non-Turkish-speaking reader, there are a few scholarly narratives of classical Ottoman architecture that include excellent summaries of this period, and one notable for the attention paid to interactions with the wider Islamic world (Necipoğlu 1994). Their succinct nature has meant that the focus of these works has been on royal constructions in the Ottoman capitals of Bursa (1324–1365) and Edirne (1365–1453), but some (e.g., Goodwin 1971: 73–92; Kuban 2010: 83–161) include a few buildings by lesser patrons. Many more are included in the catalogues of Kuran and Ayverdi and examined further in focused studies that are rarely read outside Turkey. Their approach – often descriptive and typological, and sometimes ideologically biased – may be unpopular but their erudition in mapping buildings of greater and lesser Ottoman patrons indiscriminately is admirable.

Continuity and Change under Orhan and Murad I (1326–1389)

A continuity of Byzantine techniques in constructions under the early Ottoman rulers Orhan and Murad I (r. 1362–1389) is evident. This must have been affected by craftsmen trained in the local tradition. For example, *opus mixtum* walls consisting of alternating bands of brick and stone, and the use of spolia and pseudo-spolia usually in exactly the same places of the buildings as they would have been in their Byzantine counterparts, indicate the continued employment of a local workforce (Çağaptay 2011a; Ousterhout 1995, 2004).

The history of such a conservative craft as architecture inevitably presents plenty of examples of continued practice with changing meaning. The case of spolia in *beylik* architecture may be a particularly good one. On façades of buildings in Bursa (conquered in 1326) and Iznik (conquered in 1331), the heartlands of the Ottoman *beylik*, reused structural pieces such as column capitals are positioned in architectonically correct ways, somewhat inconspicuously, as they were in the Byzantine architecture of Bithynia (Ousterhout 1995, 2004). Further afield in the Çanakkale peninsula and Thrace, conquered by Orhan's sons Süleyman (d. *c.* 1360) and Murad in the 1350s and 1360s, ancient and Byzantine pieces were reused as decorative elements on façades. These include a Byzantine lintel with a church inscription and a *chi-rho* christogram at the gate into Murad I's mosque in Behramkale/Assos (Figure 29.1); a Hellenistic cornice decorated with the Ionian kymation motif reused underneath the same ruler's Arabic inscription dated 1366 on a mosque in Tuzla (acquired, alongside other pieces reused in the building, from the temple of Apollon Smintheus approximately 5 km away); and a late antique head of a statue reused at the gable end of the southwestern façade of a hospice in Gümülcine/Komotini (Greece) constructed by the commander Evrenos Ghazi following his conquest of the area in 1363.

On the one hand, these Ottoman examples continue a practice of conspicuously immured spolia in Byzantine Greece, which may have carried a multitude of meanings associated with approaches to the past (see Papalexandrou 2003). On the other hand, in the context of the Muslim conquests, the same practice may have become a trademark of Anatolian *ghazi*hood, or war for the faith. The Ottoman examples mentioned above have precedents and parallels in the buildings of renowned *ghazi* rulers of other *beylik*s in western Anatolia. A Roman statue of a lion was reused at the southeast corner of the mosque of the Aydinid ruler Mehmed Bey (1312–1313) in Birgi, constructed soon after he conquered the town from the Byzantines and announced his independence from his previous overlord, the Germiyanid Yaʿqub Bey. Another example is the entrance to the tomb of the Sarukhanid ruler Ishaq Bey at his complex in Manisa (1366–1367), flanked by two Byzantine columns reused out of structural context.

The Aydinids and Sarukhanids were allies in war against the Byzantines in western Anatolia and Thrace. They and the Ottomans created the perfect environment where medieval *ghazi* lore could continue to flourish. Specific meaning attributed to spolia in this context is suggested by a recurrent theme in Turkish *ghazi* legends, including the probably thirteenth-century *Battalname* and its sequel, the *Danishmendname* (rewritten in 1360 based on an earlier original), and the earliest extant indigenous account of Ottoman conquests written by Ahmedi in the early fifteenth century. The first thing that the protagonists of these accounts typically

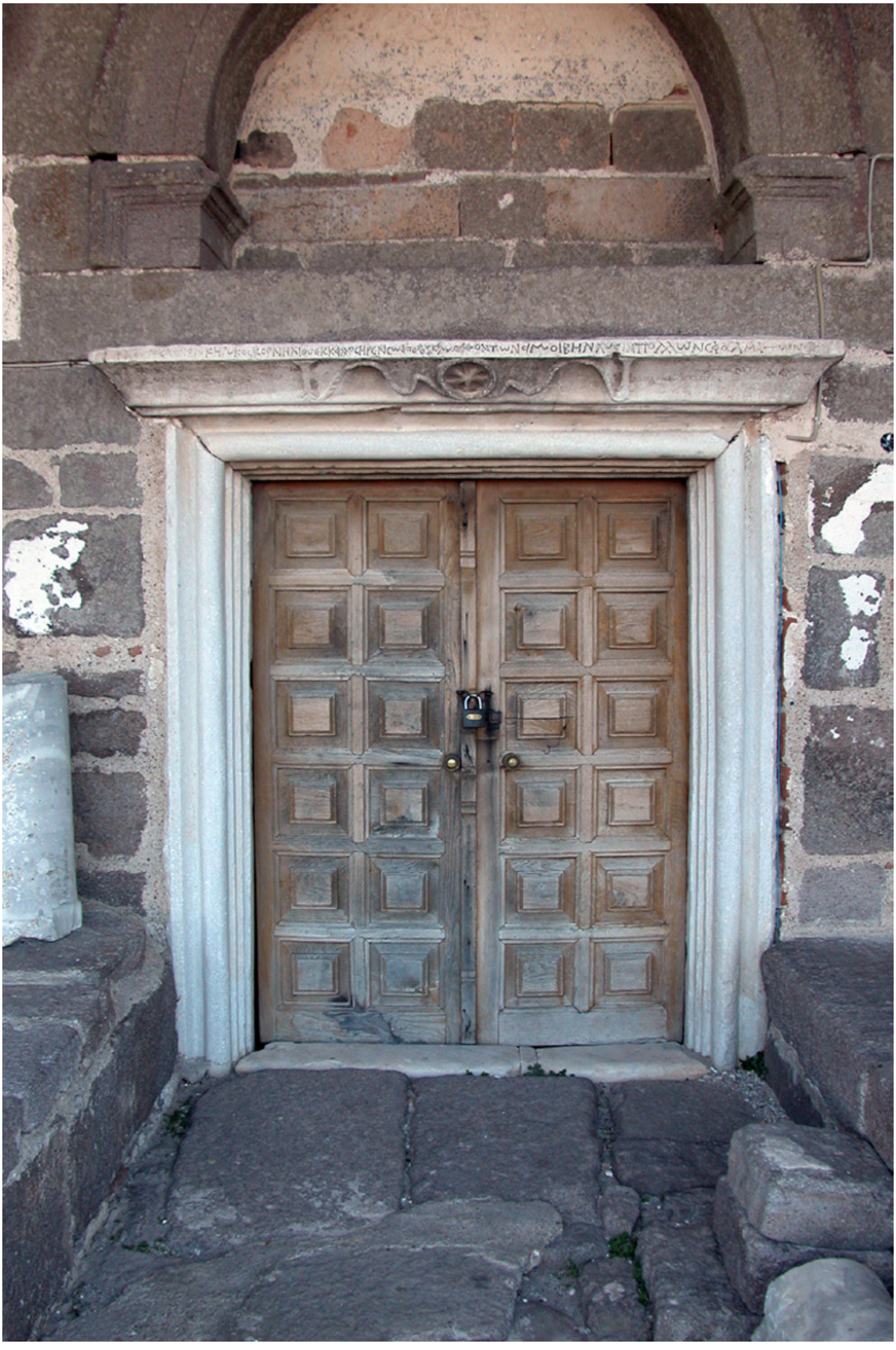

FIGURE 29.1 Behramkale (Assos), mosque of Murad I, *c.* 1380. Gate with reused Byzantine lintel from a church of St. Cornelius. Source: Zeynep Yürekli. Reproduced with permission.

do after a conquest is to demolish Byzantine churches and monasteries and construct mosques and madrasas in their stead. Most probably orally transmitted in military circles at the Byzantine frontiers, these legends may have led to the association of spolia with the concepts of conquest, destruction, and construction in the name of Islam (Yürekli 2011).

Unlike masonry techniques, early Ottoman town settlement patterns and the plan types of buildings suggest more change than continuity. Çağaptay has aptly proposed "accommodation" as an alternative concept to "appropriation" with respect to the early Ottomans' relationship to Byzantine structures in the capital Bursa (Çağaptay 2011b). Ourania Bessi's study of settlement patterns in four towns in the southern Balkans (Dimetoka/Didymoteichon, Gümülcine/Komotini, Siroz/Serres, and Yenice-i Vardar/Giannitsa) conquered under Murad I provides a glimpse of this phenomenon that is yet to be studied in detail for other towns. Based on primary sources as well as architectural remains, Bessi demonstrates that urban planning in the aftermath of a town's conquest, however spontaneous at first sight, may in fact have been quite systematic. The relationship between the various components that made up the early Ottoman town and the Byzantine fortification, which was marginalized to be used for administrative purposes, was quite similar across towns (Bessi 2014). This mirrors the early development of Bursa, where Orhan Ghazi established his palace quarters in the walled city and created a new settlement outside it (Kuran 1996).

The typical early Ottoman additions to a newly conquered town included a Friday mosque, a market area, bathhouses, soup kitchens, and devotional/educational institutions including Sufi lodges, madrasas, and primary schools. Both in the Balkans and in Anatolia, Friday mosques were built in close proximity to the market area. Charitable and educational functions were often gathered around a distinctively Ottoman multifunctional building type with a T-shaped plan, containing usually a sanctuary at the narrow end and subsidiary rooms constituting the wide end of the T. These so called T-type *ʿimaret*s or hospice-mosques were built in the outskirts of towns and helped to achieve a controlled and socially healthy urban expansion. As in other parts of the Turko-Mongol Islamic world, each complex was supported by endowments set up by an individual patron, who could be buried in a tomb next to the complex.

In Bursa, both Orhan and Murad I built Friday mosques and T buildings surrounded by multifunctional complexes. This dual patronage pattern would continue in Bursa and in the subsequent capitals Edirne and Istanbul up until the time of Mehmed II (Crane 1991). The earliest extant Ottoman Friday mosques consist of rows of unidimensional modular units covered by domes carried on piers. Poor survival and unreliable dating stands in the way of fully understanding the architectural features of Ottoman Friday mosques before the time of Bayezid I (r. 1389–1402). The Friday mosque of Filibe (Plovdiv, Bulgaria), the single intact Friday mosque that was thought to be of Murad I's reign, has recently been shown to date from that of Murad II (Boykov 2013: 51–57). While the T-type hospice-mosques of Orhan (1339, rebuilt after 1417) and Murad I (1365–1383) in Bursa have endured through the centuries, thanks in part to the generously endowed charitable institutions surrounding them, the contemporary Friday mosques in the same city have not survived. The only thing that remains of Orhan's Friday mosque is an inscription dated 1337–1338, and only a reduced shadow of Murad I's multi-domed Friday mosque (begun in 1365, the same year as his T-type hospice-mosque) is discernable (Crane 1991: 174–175).

Orhan's T-type hospice-mosque in Bursa was built in 1339 but was severely damaged during a Qaramanid raid of the city in 1414 and rebuilt by Mehmed I. It is the centerpiece of a complex that also included a madrasa, a bathhouse, a soup kitchen, and a gargantuan urban caravanserai known as Emir Hanı. As already mentioned, at the time of its construction, Orhan's complex was located outside the town, but it quickly transformed its surroundings into a bustling commercial center catering to the international silk trade. Later sultans commissioned their multifunctional complexes away from this new town center.

The complex of Murad I, known by his epithet Hüdavendigar (*khudawandgar*), in the Çekirge quarter, famous for its hot springs (then) outside Bursa, does not have a foundation inscription; its endowment deed is dated 1385, by which time the complex had been completed. It included a dervish lodge, a bathhouse, a soup kitchen, and a primary school around a T-type building that comprises a sanctuary and a madrasa. The current building dates mostly from a nineteenth-century restoration following the devastating earthquake of 1855, but it largely reflects the original. In a spatial arrangement unique in Ottoman architecture, it includes residential rooms for madrasa students on a second story above the subsidiary rooms that constitute the wide end of the T-shaped plan.

A mausoleum for Murad, who died on the battlefield in Kosovo in 1389, was constructed by his son Bayezid I next to the Hüdavendigar complex. Osman and Orhan had both been buried in existing Byzantine structures in the citadel. The burial of Murad I in a newly constructed freestanding tomb next to his primary charitable institution initiated a long-term practice that would continue up until the sixteenth century, culminating with the Süleymaniye complex in Istanbul.

Bayezid I and the Anatolian Heritage (1389–1402)

Bayezid was the forerunner of his acclaimed great-grandson Mehmed II, and anticipated much of what would become Mehmed's imperial project (Necipoğlu 2012). He set out to realize a longtime aspiration of *ghazi*s that eventually became Mehmed's crowning achievement, namely the conquest of Constantinople. However, aggression toward Turkmen neighbors (yet another similarity with his great-grandson) brought him down before he could realize this dream. Turkmen amirs sought the intervention of Timur (r. *c.* 1370–1405), who invaded Anatolia in 1402 and taught Bayezid a lesson for starting an empire in a world that was supposed to be his. Anatolia was divided back into Turkmen principalities, and Bayezid died (or committed suicide according to some accounts) in captivity the following year. His sons fought over what remained of Ottoman territory in western Anatolia and the Balkans. It took a decade for one of them, Mehmed I, to emerge as sole inheritor of Bayezid's shrunken empire. Mehmed proclaimed himself sultan in Edirne following a final victory over his brother Musa in 1413. His reign (1413–1421) and that of his son Murad II (r. 1421–1444, 1446–1451) saw the construction of some of the masterpieces of Ottoman architecture such as the Green Mosque in Bursa (1419–1421) (see Figure 29.3 and Figure 29.4) and the Triple-Galleried (Üç Şerefeli) Mosque in Edirne (1438–1447) (see Figure 29.5), which, as we shall see, manifest architectural and decorative choices that would eventually become a part of the classical Ottoman idiom.

In the late fourteenth century, Ottoman architecture shifted away from the characteristic Bythinian combination of brick and stone (*opus mixtum)*, ornamented predominantly with spolia and simple bordures, towards ashlar masonry with custom-designed, elaborate ornamentation. This paradigmatic shift, probably inspired by the architectural culture of former Rum Seljuq and Mongol regions conquered from Turkmen principalities in the 1390s, was due in part to craftsmen from Mamluk and Timurid lands (Necipoğlu 1994: 150–153; Necipoğlu 2005: 77–80). The period between 1390 and 1450, when Bayezid I, Mehmed I, and Murad II reigned, saw a great degree of experimentation with foreign modes of construction and decoration.

These buildings should be seen against a background of migrant or mobile craftsmen attracted to patrons with accumulated wealth and a desire to try new things. Meinecke has highlighted the impact of the dispersal of the international team of craftsmen who worked on the construction of the Sultan Hasan complex in Cairo in 1359. Skilled craftsmen lacking employment in the Mamluk capital seem to have gone initially to Syria, whence some traveled to western Anatolia to work on buildings constructed by Sarukhanid, Aydinid, Ottoman, and Qaramanid patrons (Meinecke 1992: vol. 1, 130–143). Though a direct connection with Mamluk Cairo is hard to prove, we do know that Syrian craftsmen found employment in Anatolia in the fourteenth century, just as their predecessors had in the Seljuq period (Redford 2013; Tanman 2012). Some of them seem to have entered Ottoman service following the annexation of Anatolian principalities by Bayezid I in the 1390s. For example, the woodworker Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAziz from ʿAyntab (modern Gaziantep, then under Mamluk rule), who made the undated wooden minbar of the congregational mosque of the Sarukhanid ruler Ishaq Bey in Manisa (1366–1367), also signed the minbar of Bayezid I's Friday mosque in Bursa (1396–1400) (Meinecke 1976: vol. 2, 401; Oral 1962: 67; Tanman 2012: 296). Muhammad may have entered Ottoman service with the annexation of the Sarukhanid territory in 1390, and received a specific request to make a comparable minbar for the Ottoman capital.

The expansionist policy of the Ottoman ruler Bayezid I in Anatolia may account for the paradigm shift of the 1390s. Elements of the new Ottoman idiom, such as the predominance of stone, sculpted portals, and color-glazed tiles, were already deep-seated in the architectural culture of the vast Anatolian region conquered by this sultan in the early 1390s, which roughly corresponded to the old Rum Seljuq territories, occupied in the fourteenth century by Mongol and Turkmen principalities. The monumentality and grandeur of the architecture in the conquered regions seems to have resonated with the ambitious personality of Bayezid I, in whose stone-built constructions in Bursa we witness a decisive break from the customary *opus mixtum* construction methods of the region (Ayverdi 1966: 419–440; Necipoğlu 1994: 150).

Mosques of Bayezid I and Mehmed I (1389–1421)

In terms of the typology of royal mosques, the duality evident from the time of Orhan continued under Bayezid and his successors, who built Friday mosques as well as multifunctional funerary royal complexes with inverted-T type hospice-mosques. Bayezid's T-type hospice-mosque (1391–1395) was the centerpiece of the public/charitable portion of his royal complex in Bursa, which also comprised his palace. This included a dervish lodge, two madrasas, a hospital, a bathhouse, a soup kitchen, and a travelers' lodge (of which only one of the madrasas, the hospital, and the bathhouse have remained); as noted above, Bayezid's mausoleum would be added posthumously, in 1406. This ambitious project on the outskirts of the city was followed by a Friday mosque (1396–1400) in the commercial center of the town, which has been heavily restored several times since. Its plan consists of 20 equally dimensioned square bays covered by domes. The central row leading to the mihrab is accentuated by the raised drums of the four domes that cover it, as well as a lantern extending above the second dome from the entrance.

A Friday mosque (known as the Old Mosque after the construction of the nearby Triple-Galleried Mosque; see Figure 29.5) was built in Edirne between 1403 and 1414 as the city changed hands between three competing sons of Bayezid. The construction started under Prince Süleyman (who was also the patron of his father Bayezid's tomb in Bursa), continued under Prince Musa, and was completed under Mehmed I. According to Mehmed's inscription dated 1414, the architect (*miʿmar*) was a vizier named al-Hajj ʿAlaʾ al-Din, "the pride of viziers" (iftikhar al-sudur) (Ayverdi 1972: 159). The person who carried out the construction (*ʿāmil*), however, was ʿUmar b. Ibrahim, the builder of two bathhouses in eastern Bithynia in the 1380s (Ayverdi 1966: 353–354, 384). Like Bayezid's Friday mosque in Bursa, this mosque is in the commercial center of Edirne. Architecturally, it is a smaller version of its predecessor in Bursa. It has a plan that consists of nine square units covered by domes. The central bay is highlighted by raised drums and a lantern protruding from the dome covering the entrance bay. Unlike Bayezid's Bursa mosque (at least as it currently exists), it has an entrance portico.

Mehmed I then proceeded to build a multifunctional complex in Bursa, centered like its predecessors around a T-type hospice-mosque. Known as the Green Mosque, this building and its decoration, executed under the auspices of the vizier and architect ʿIvaz Pasha (d. 1429) and the *naqqash* (painter-designer) ʿAli b. Ilyas, has received great scholarly attention. I shall try to demonstrate that it stands out as a particularly interesting case of a joint royal/vizierial undertaking. Therefore, a quick look at the role of other early Ottoman viziers in architectural practice is in order, before we turn our full attention to this iconic structure.

The Mosques of Çandarlı Qara Khalil Pasha and Bayezid Pasha

As far as the role of patronage in Ottoman architectural culture goes, there can be little doubt that royal ambitions, tastes, and interests were driving forces. However, rulers were not necessarily the sole, perhaps not even the primary, decision-makers behind the particular aesthetic, stylistic, and media-based choices made in the process. The limited evidence we have suggests that early Ottoman viziers, as likely initial employers of craftsmen to be recommended for royal projects, seem to have played an important role in the transfer of skills, styles, and techniques from foreign lands.

In a survey of Ottoman royal constructions, the decisive point of rupture with the local brick-and-stone construction techniques used in earlier Byzantine architecture would appear to be the early 1390s, when the T-type hospice-mosque complex and the Friday mosque of Bayezid I in Bursa were constructed (Özbek 2002). If we look further than royalty, however, the grand vizier Çandarlı Qara Khalil Pasha (d. 1387) emerges as the first Ottoman patron who broke the mold. His mosque in Iznik, known also as the Green Mosque (1378–1392) (Figure 29.2), is the earliest Ottoman building that was built entirely of stone with the exception of its brick-and-tilework minaret and with an extensive program of carved marble decoration (Demiriz 1979: 595–614; Özbek 2002: 82–122). An inscription above the gate states that the construction started in 1378–1379 under Qara Khalil. A second inscription on the front porch dates its completion to 1391–1392, and a builder (*bani*) named Hajji b. Musa is mentioned next to it. The mosque is modest in size but ambitious in decoration. The carved marble decoration includes distinctively Mamluk features such as the *muqarnas* frieze that frames the central bay of the front porch (see Figure 29.2). Meinecke argued, based on the characteristic corners of this frieze, that some of the Syrian stonemasons who had worked on the mosque of the Aydinid ruler ʿIsa Bey (1374–1375) in Ayasuluk (Selçuk) were employed here, and would be employed later in Bursa for the T-shaped hospice-mosque of Bayezid I (1394–1395) (Meinecke 1992: vol. 1, 141–142). This suggests that vizierial

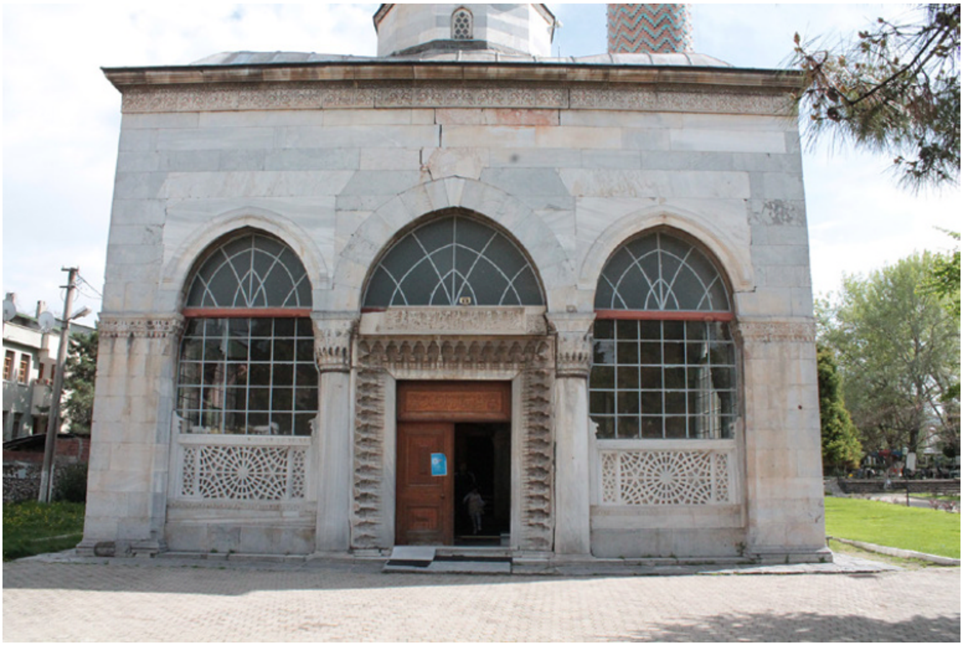

Figure 29.2 Iznik, mosque of Çandarlı Kara Halil Pasha (a.k.a. Green Mosque), 1378–1392. Source: Suat Alp. Reproduced with permission.

constructions such as the Çandarlı mosque may have served as trial ground or promotional springboard for foreign craftsmen to be employed in royal buildings.

The same is suggested also by the career trajectory of two craftsmen who worked on the mosque of the vizier Bayezid Pasha in Amasya (1414). One of them is a *miʿmar* named Toğan who was a freed slave (*ʿatiq*) of Bayezid Pasha, recorded as son of ʿAbdallah, a generic paternal name given to converts (Sönmez 1989: 410–412). Six years later, he was working with ʿIvaz Pasha on the Friday mosque of Mehmed I in Dimetoka (Didymoteichon, Greece) (Ayverdi 1957). The other craftsman is Abu Bakr b. Muhammad of Damascus, "known as Ibn Mushaymish" according to the inscription on Bayezid Pasha's mosque (Ayverdi 1972: 14, 22; Sönmez 1989: 403–409) and thus perhaps a relative of ʿAli b. Mushaymish, who had worked on the Aydinid mosque in Ayasuluk (Meinecke 1976: vol. 2, 415; Sönmez 1989: 347–351; Tanman 2012: 288). The Amasya Mosque of Bayezid Pasha follows the Ottoman T-shaped plan, but the Syrian origins of Abu Bakr are reflected in the predominance of polychrome masonry in the front porch. His work for Bayezid Pasha seems to have qualified him for royal employment immediately, given that his name then appears on the madrasa of Sultan Mehmed I in Merzifon (1414–1417) (Ayverdi 1972: 4, 185–190; Sönmez 1989: 403–407), a four-iwan structure in the Seljuq tradition where the exact same colored stone combination as in Amasya was used. Abu Bakr probably remained in Ottoman lands permanently, given that his son would be the architect of the hospice-mosque of the commander and vizier Karaca Bey in Ankara (*c.* 1430–1440) (Ayverdi 1972: 22; Sönmez 1989: 403–409, 415–422).

The Green Mosque in Bursa (1419–1424) and Later Buildings

Among viziers who acted as patrons of architecture, the vizier ʿIvaz Pasha stands out for his profound interest in the visual arts, and contributions to Ottoman architectural culture as patron, architect, and construction supervisor. His role in shaping the Green Mosque complex in Bursa seems to have been much greater than that of Mehmed I, who is identified as patron in the foundation inscription above the entrance to the mosque dated 1419 (*Dhi al-hijja* 822) (Figure 29.3). Another inscription right below it identifies "Hajji ʿIvaz son of Akhi Bayezid" as "the person who drew [the building], arranged it, and fixed its principles" (*raqimuhu wa nazimuhu wa muqanninu qawaninihi*) (Ayverdi 1972: 93–94). The fact that a portico was apparently planned but not built has been taken to suggest that construction activity may have ceased owing to Mehmed's death in 1421, but, as we will see, work on its decoration continued up until 1424, at which time ʿIvaz was still a vizier under Murad II. There is even the possibility that ʿIvaz may have seen the completion of the decorative program at his own expense, just as he paid for the construction of a caravanserai as a gift to the endowment of Mehmed I (Pay 1996: 41). This possibility is supported by the Persian inscription on the wooden door panels of the Green Tomb in Bursa, which refers to Mehmed I as deceased (*al-maghfur lahu*, "the forgiven") and further reads, "on the order of (*ba-isharat-i*) Hajji ʿIvaz b. *akhina* (our Akhi) Bayezid, the prudent vizier (*vazir-i sahib-i tadbir*)" (Ayverdi 1972: 108–109).

ʿIvaz was from the central Anatolian town Tokat. His father Bayezid was a member and probably a local leader of the *futuwwa* (fraternity) organization of Akhis. After the town was conquered by Bayezid I from the Eretnid governor Qadi Burhan al-din in 1393, ʿIvaz entered the service of Prince Mehmed (I), governor of nearby Amasya. At the conclusion of the interregnum in 1413, he was appointed *su-başı* (prefect of security forces) of Bursa, and vizier after successfully defending the city against a Qaramanid siege in 1414. His power declined under the next sultan, Murad II, who heeded warnings concerning ʿİvaz Pasha's hunger for power and had him blinded in 1427 – an undoubtedly devastating punishment for a man with a profound interest in visual arts. ʿAşıkpaşazade, writing around 1480, presents him as the first patron to bring groups of foreign craftsmen to the Ottoman lands, and the first vizier to have feasts in his palace with food offered on metal trays (ʿAşıkpaşazade 1972: 197). ʿIvaz also seems to have been interested in collecting illuminated manuscripts (Algaç 2002; Ünver 1951: 8). Yet architecture seems to have been his greatest passion. He was responsible for

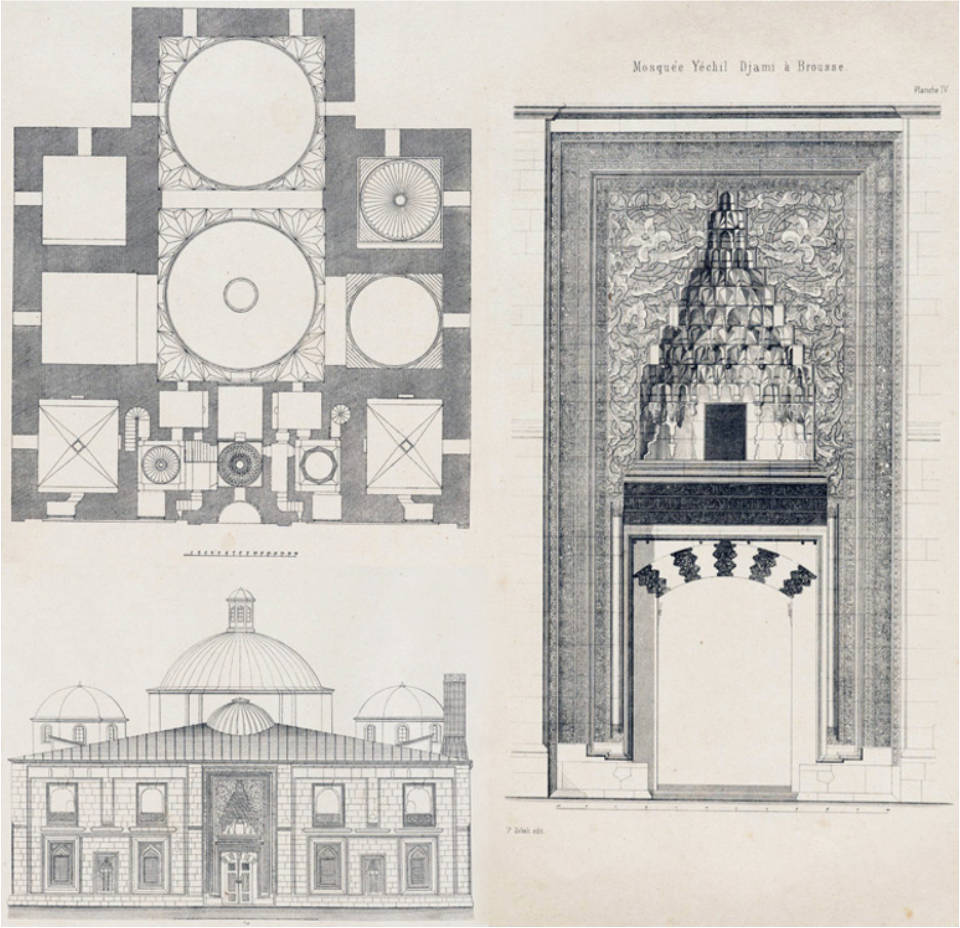

Figure 29.3 Bursa, Green Mosque, 1419–1424. Source: Plan, entrance facade and portal drawings from De Launay *et al.* 1873.

a number of buildings constructed during the reign of Mehmed I. Though some scholars believe that ʿIvaz Pasha's role must have been that of a construction supervisor rather than a designer, he seems to have filled a little of both roles simultaneously. An inscription on the mosque of Mehmed I in Dimetoka praises him as "the pride of mathematicians/engineers (*muhandisin*), the choice of architects/builders (*muʿammirin*), the skilled master of his craft (*al-ustad al-mahir fi sanʿatihi*)" (Ayverdi 1957: 15). Besides royal complexes, ʿİvaz also built, with endowments from his private properties, complexes in his native Tokat, in nearby Beyobası, where his father Akhi Bayezid was buried, and in Bursa (Pay 1996; Uzunçarşılı 1959).

The Green Mosque in Bursa is very similar in plan and size to Bayezid I's T-type hospice-mosque in the same city, but it has an additional upper floor accessed with staircases on either side of the vestibule, which comprises a royal loggia overlooking the central hall (see Figure 29.3 and Figure 29.4). This is the first known Ottoman example of a raised royal loggia, traces of which are found in central Anatolian mosques from the late twelfth century onwards (Tanman 2003; Tükel Yavuz 1987). In fact, along with the subsidiary rooms surrounding the loggia, the entire upper story is likely to have functioned as a VIP section.

The signature of ʿAli b. Ilyas ʿAli, "known as *naqqāsh* (designer-decorator) ʿAli," followed by the date 15–30 August 1424, is prominently displayed on a stone slab above the opening of the royal loggia to the central hall (see Figure 29.4). This is likely to be the same *naqqash* ʿAli who according to Taşköprizade (d. 1561) was born in Bursa and transported by Timur to Central Asia as a child (Necipoğlu 1990: 136). Taşköprizade claims that ʿAli was the first person in the lands of Rum to produce ornamented saddles (*al-suruj al-munaqqasha*) (Raby and Tanındı 1993: 23–24; Taşköprizade 1985: 437), probably similar to those depicted in Timurid manuscripts (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 167, 184, 189). He does not mention ʿAli's involvement in architectural design, but it was not unusual for a Timurid *naqqash* to produce designs for a variety of media. A report from Prince Baysunghur's atelier in Herat *c.* 1427–1428 (which incidentally also reports various individuals working on a single ornamented saddle) mentions a *naqqash* working simultaneously on designs to be executed by bookbinders, illuminators, tentmakers, and tilecutters (*ʿArzadasht*, ms. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, H. 2153: fol. 98a; Thackston 2001: 43–44).

The Green Mosque and Tomb are lavishly decorated with tilework, woodwork, stucco, frescoes (of which only traces remain), and carved marble. Many aspects of the decoration have parallels in the Timurid and Turkmen east, but some input from Mamluk lands was undoubtedly also sought. The inlaid silver decoration on the iron window grilles is, for example, the first of its kind in Anatolia, with parallels only in late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mamluk buildings in Cairo and Aleppo (Mols 2006: 65–68, 104–105, 209–210, 243–244, 331, 401, 416, 453; Tanman 2012: 294; Yalman 2003). Much of the workforce for the rest of the decoration seems to have been imported from Tabriz, the capital of "Black Sheep" Turkmens (Qaraqoyunlu). The wooden door panels of the Green Tomb were signed by ʿAli b. Hajji Ahmad of Tabriz (Ayverdi 1972: 109; Ünver 1951: 10). The tilework was signed by "masters from Tabriz" (*ustadan-i Tabriz*), who seem to have used local kilns for this commission (Necipoğlu 1990: 136). It includes tiles made in the black-line technique, a polychrome overglaze painting technique that originated in late fourteenth-century Central Asia and involves a matte black substance separating the colors during the second firing. As demonstrated by Samkoff (2014: 200–201), this technique, previously mislabeled *cuerda seca* (dry cord), in fact developed independently from the Spanish technique by this name where wax was employed for separating the colors during firing. In Bursa, the black-line technique was used alongside color-glazed and underglaze-painted techniques. In design and color palette, the black-line tile panels in Bursa

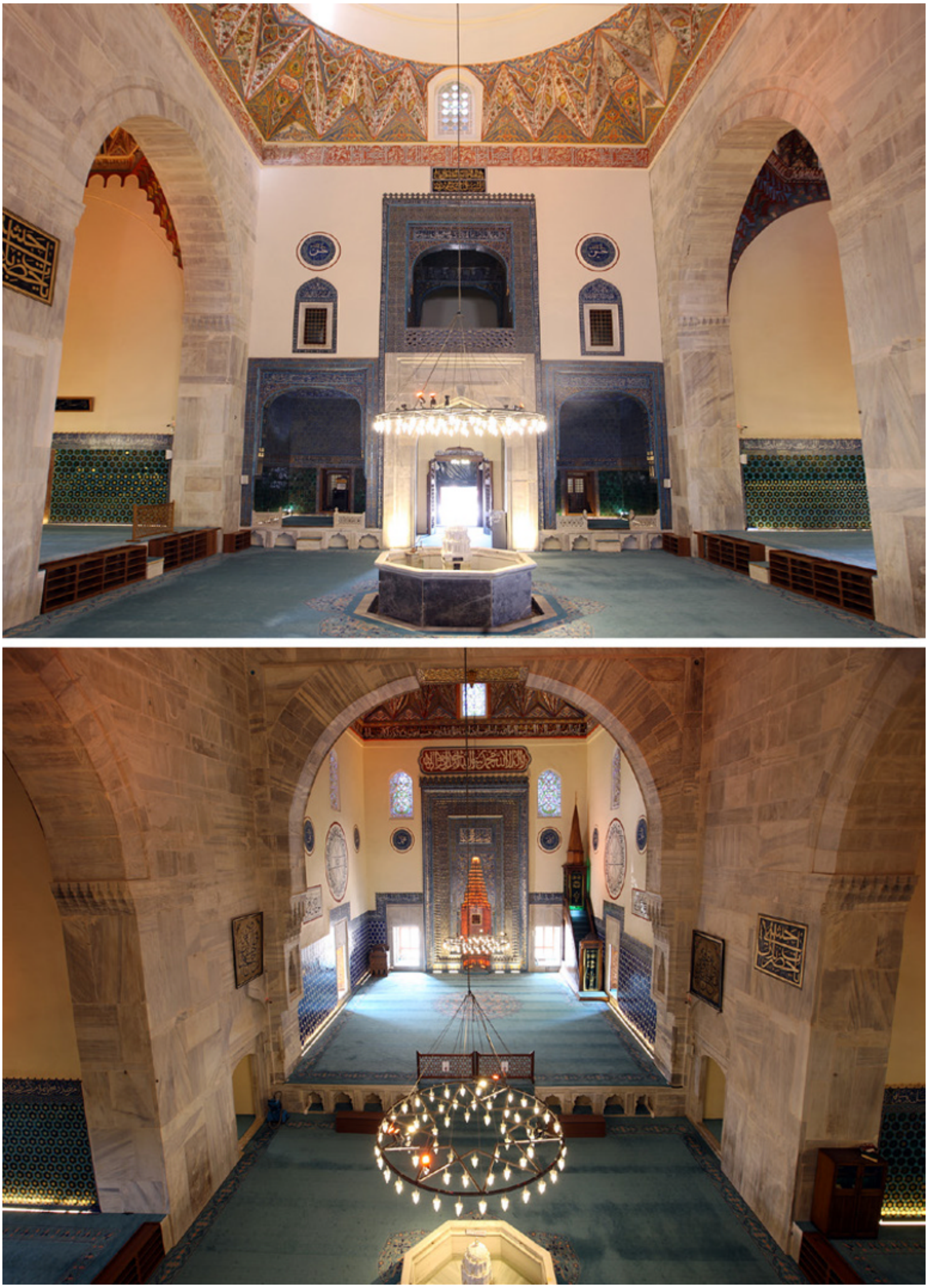

Figure 29.4 Bursa, Green Mosque, 1419–1424. Interior view towards the entrance and royal loggia (top) and view from the royal loggia (bottom). Source: Bursa Metropolitan Municipality Photography Archive (http://fotograf.bursa.com.tr).

are similar to those in early Timurid buildings much further east, including Timur's palace (Aq Saray) in Shahr-i Sabz near Samarqand (1395–1396), signed similarly by a Tabrizi master (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, 273). Also the combination with hexagonal green/turquoise color-glazed tiles is an eastern feature. In particular, the medallion insets into the monochrome tile revetment inside the tomb have parallels in the Muzaffarid section of the Friday mosque in Yazd (1375–1376), the shrine of Ahmad Yasavi built by Timur in Yasa/Turkistan (1389–1405), and the tomb of Qutham b. ʿAbbas at the Shah-i Zinda cemetery in Samarqand (restored *c.* 1404–1405) (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, 235–236, 286, 415–461; vol. 2, pl. xvi, figs. 17, 128, 460; Bernus-Taylor 1997: 259). There is, however, a technical difference: While in all these eastern examples the medallions are executed in tile mosaic, the Tabrizi masters in Bursa executed them in the black-line technique. Furthermore, the exterior of the tomb is almost entirely covered by monochrome hexagonal tiles, a type that seems to have been reserved for interiors in the Timurid world. Meanwhile, in the mosque, unlike its Iranian or Central Asian precedents and contemporaries, or the portal of the adjacent tomb, polychrome tilework is limited to the interior space. The highlight of the mosque's milky white ashlar masonry exterior is the deeply and intricately carved expensive marble decoration around the gate (Figure 29.3) and windows.

The application of highly specialized crafts such as Timurid/Turkmen black-line tilework and Mamluk silver inlay (*kuft*) for the first time in the Ottoman realm under ʿIvaz Pasha's supervision confirms ʿAşıkpaşazade's statement that this vizier was a pioneer in the importation of foreign craftsmen to the Ottoman lands. Applied first to the Green Mosque in Bursa, tile revetment in the Timurid mode was quickly absorbed into the royal repertoire and adapted. It remained an increasingly limited part of the royal decorative repertoire in Edirne and then Istanbul up until the 1550s, when Iznik tiles, with their quite different and distinctive aesthetic, took over (Necipoğlu 1990). The Tabrizi masters who worked on the Green Mosque appear to have been subsequently employed for the mihrab of the hospice-mosque of the Qaramanid ruler Ibrahim II (r. 1424–1464) dated 1432 in Qaraman (O'Kane 2011: 193), and returned to Ottoman employment for the decoration of the hospice-mosque of Murad II in Edirne, known as the Muradiye (1433), where they similarly combined black-line, color-glazed, and underglaze painted tiles (Meinecke 1976: vol. 1, 102–114; Necipoğlu 1990: 136–137; O'Kane 2011: 193–194; Riefstahl 1937: 269).

The Muradiye Mosque in Edirne is one of Murad II's two T-type hospice-mosques built as part of charitable complexes in Bursa and Edirne. The Edirne complex also included a dervish lodge for the Mawlawi Sufi order, which was reportedly adjacent to a soup kitchen and a primary school, all now lost, while its older counterpart on the outskirts of Bursa (*c.* 1426) comprises a soup kitchen, madrasa, and bathhouse, as well as the later posthumously built mausolea of Murad II and several Ottoman princes and royal women. The Bursa complex was the last royal complex to be built by the Ottomans in this city, while the Edirne complex was the last of its kind.

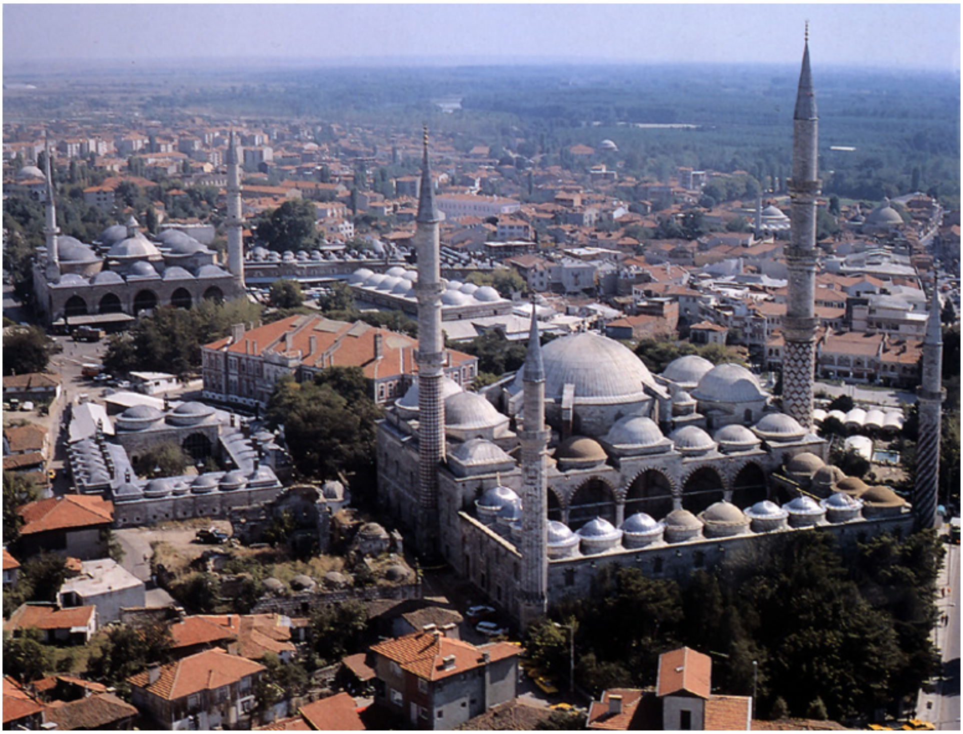

FIGURE 29.5 Edirne, Triple-Galleried (Üç Şerefeli) Mosque, 1437–1447. View from the northeast with the Old Friday mosque, 1403–1414, in the background on the left. Source: Necipoğlu 2005: 80, fig. 53. After Bumin, K., Güner S., and S. Pekşirin (1993). *Edirne*. Ankara: Ministry of Culture. Reproduced with permission.

Following the example of previous Ottoman rulers, Murad II complemented his patronage of a hospice-mosque complex with that of a Friday mosque in Edirne, known as the Triple-Galleried Mosque (1437–1447) (Figure 29.5). The charitable and educational institutions of early Ottoman sultans were concentrated around their T-type hospice-mosques rather than their Friday mosques, but the Triple-Galleried Mosque complex did include a madrasa and a primary school according to the earliest known record of the endowment from 1490, while a second madrasa was added by Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481) (Barkan 1964: 321–325). Architecturally, the mosque is a clear break from the Ottoman multidome tradition. The area between the entrance and mihrab is covered by a big dome rising on a hexagonal base, while the lateral spaces are covered by two smaller domes each. In its plan, the mosque evokes the Sarukhanid mosque in Manisa (1366–1367), which was a part of the Ottoman domain from 1390 and following the interregnum, permanently from 1412. This plan type, which has precedents in Mamluk Cairo and Damascus (Meinecke 1992: vol. 1, 136–138; Tanman 2012: 284–286), may have been a contribution of the Syrian craftsmen employed for the Sarukhanid project, though the architect ʿAmad b. ʿOsman's place of origin remains unknown and the above-mentioned woodworker Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAziz from ʿAyntab remains the mosque's single documented link to the Mamluk world.

The Edirne mosque has been regarded as a prototype of later Friday mosques built by Ottoman sultans in certain key aspects. The preference for a prayer space that is minimally interrupted by piers would become the norm after the conquest of Constantinople. The front courtyard with a fountain surrounded by columnar porticos is the earliest extant example of what would become a typical feature of Ottoman royal mosques. Also, the decoration reflects the multicultural aesthetic of the time, but in novel ways that foreshadow classical Ottoman architecture. For example, the Timurid aesthetic mode was adopted in the two surviving tile panels decorating the window lunettes under the portico, which mimic the black-line tile technique used in the Green Mosque of Bursa and the Muradiye Mosque in Edirne but were executed in the simpler underglaze-painting technique at the expense of fewer colors being used (Necipoğlu 1990: 137; O'Kane 2011: 194). The interior decoration was predominantly paint work, as in Ottoman mosques of the classical age. The masonry traditions of Anatolia and the Mamluk lands were used in a selective manner. Limestone was the primary building material, while white marble was reserved for columns, capitals, portals, and window frames. Red stone was used for repetitive decoration on the minaret and around the portals and windows, and in alternation with limestone for the voussoirs of arches. This combination highlighted, rather than masking with decoration, the structural aspects of the building, heralding the structural clarity and decorative logic that would characterize classical Ottoman architecture.

Concluding Remarks

Underlying the multicultural nature of the examples above was an expanding and evolving Ottoman polity that increasingly became an extension of the eastern Islamic world. Under Orhan and Murad I the Ottoman *beylik* was largely grounded in the politics and practices of *ghazi* polities in western Anatolia. Yet from the reign of Bayezid I onwards, the Ottomans came in close contact with the Jalayirid, Timurid, Turkmen, and Mamluk worlds. Many elements of Ottoman architecture in this period, including some that have been singled out as innovations in modern Turkish scholarship, were shared with the east. The so-called Bursa arch is a case in point. This broad two-centered arch with a flat and usually raised portion in the middle – probably transposed from wooden architecture – has generally been considered an idiosyncrasy of Ottoman architecture from Bayezid I's time to Murad II's. Yet the same peculiar form of arch was also depicted in contemporary Jalayirid and Timurid manuscripts made in Baghdad, Tabriz, and Herat (Sims 2002: 123, 136, 191, 202, 263, 240, 241), even though no built examples seem to have survived in these places.

The cases examined above confirm that the transfer of architectural and decorative knowledge between such distinct cultural and political centers was a reality. They also remind us that behind the vague art historical concepts of dynastic style, influence, evolution, and continuity that have dominated our field for most of its existence, there were real people with specific tastes, intentions, and skills – including, in the case of Ottoman architecture before Constantinople, adventurous viziers, local and migrant craftsmen, and converted slaves.

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30

Islam beyond Empires: Mosques and Islamic Landscapes in India and the Indian Ocean

Elizabeth A. Lambourn

This chapter discusses the material cultures of Muslims who lived outside Islamic polities, beyond the lands of Islam. The "Mudejar" communities of al-Andalus are probably the most familiar, but such communities existed from the very birth of the new faith, established all around the expanding Islamic empire – from West Africa via southern Europe and the Caucasus to East Africa, South Asia, and the Far East – most often as participants in international trade. The intrinsically liminal position of these communities has often left them sidelined in traditional regional historiographies or stranded between disciplines. The modesty of much of their material culture has undoubtedly run counter to Islamic art's dominant material hierarchies and the monumentalist tendencies of its architectural history. One might argue that, on the grounds of inclusivity alone, these material cultures are deserving of a place in the global history of Islamic civilization, but, more than that, this chapter argues that life beyond the lands of Islam created qualitatively different material worlds and material agencies. The study of these worlds and agencies generates important counter-narratives and new perspectives which usefully challenge the wider field of Islamic art and its frequent focus on elite production, in the process enriching our understanding of the diversity and complexity of Islam at a global level. Here I focus on the mosque architecture of Muslim communities settled in South Asia before the establishment of major Islamic polities or who continued to reside outside Islamic polities. Many of these

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communities were involved in maritime trade and this chapter therefore places particular importance on coastal sites and the broader context of the Indian Ocean.

Introduction

> Om. Om. Adoration to Vishvanatha! Adoration to Vishvanatha Vishvarupa! Adoration to Shunyarupa! Adoration to Lashyalakshya! In the year 662 of Rasula Mahammada who is the teacher of the ship-owners devoted to Vishvanatha, in the year 1320 of the illustrious king Vikrama, and in the year 945 of famous Vallabhi, and in the year 151 of the illustrious Simha, on Sunday the 13th day of the dark half of *Ashadha*.

So begins a Sanskrit grant document dated the equivalent of 25 May 1264 and which records the complex processes of patronage behind a new mosque which had just been built by the merchant and ship-owner Firuz al-ʿIraqi outside the port of Somnath in western India. These are only the opening lines of a much longer inscribed text, a text which also has an Arabic language partner, though not a translation as such (Patel 2008a). The structure was established within local, Indic legal frameworks and it is worth noting that in the Arabic text, however it may resemble a *waqf* (a formal endowment deed) in certain sections, it is never designated as such (Desai 1961). Together these inscriptions constitute one of the most remarkable textual and material sources on the processes of patronage behind Islamic religious institutions in the Indic world (see Figure 30.1).[1] In 1264 Somnath belonged to the domains of the Chalukya Vaghelas of Gujarat and it was to be another 50 years before it was durably incorporated into an expanding Khalaji Sultanate, based in Delhi. The Arabic version of this "endowment deed" openly acknowledges that Somnath was not one of the towns of Islam (*bilad al-islam*) (Desai 1961: 14) and yet the mosque and its patron belonged to a diverse and thriving Islamic landscape already deeply rooted in the Indic world.

I will return to the Somnath grants throughout the coming pages, yet even these few opening lines suffice to communicate Islam's distinctive translation to the Indic world and the alternative perspectives within which this material culture needs to be located. The Islamic lunar *hijri* calendar, understood here as the calendrical system of "Rasula Mahammada" (the Prophet Muhammad), joins the pan-Indic solar calendar of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain and two local calendrical systems. The Prophet Muhammad is the teacher of the ship-owners and Allah himself becomes Vishvanatha, literally "the Lord of the Universe"; Vishvanatha Vishvarupa, "the Lord of the Universe having various forms"; Shunyarupa, "He whose form is the void"; and Lashyalakshya, "He who is visible and invisible" (Hultzsch 1882: 244; Sircar 1961–1962: 141). These perspectives acknowledge multiple, coexisting systems of meaning, cosmopolitan linguistic and cultural landscapes, and the primacy and agency of maritime communities.

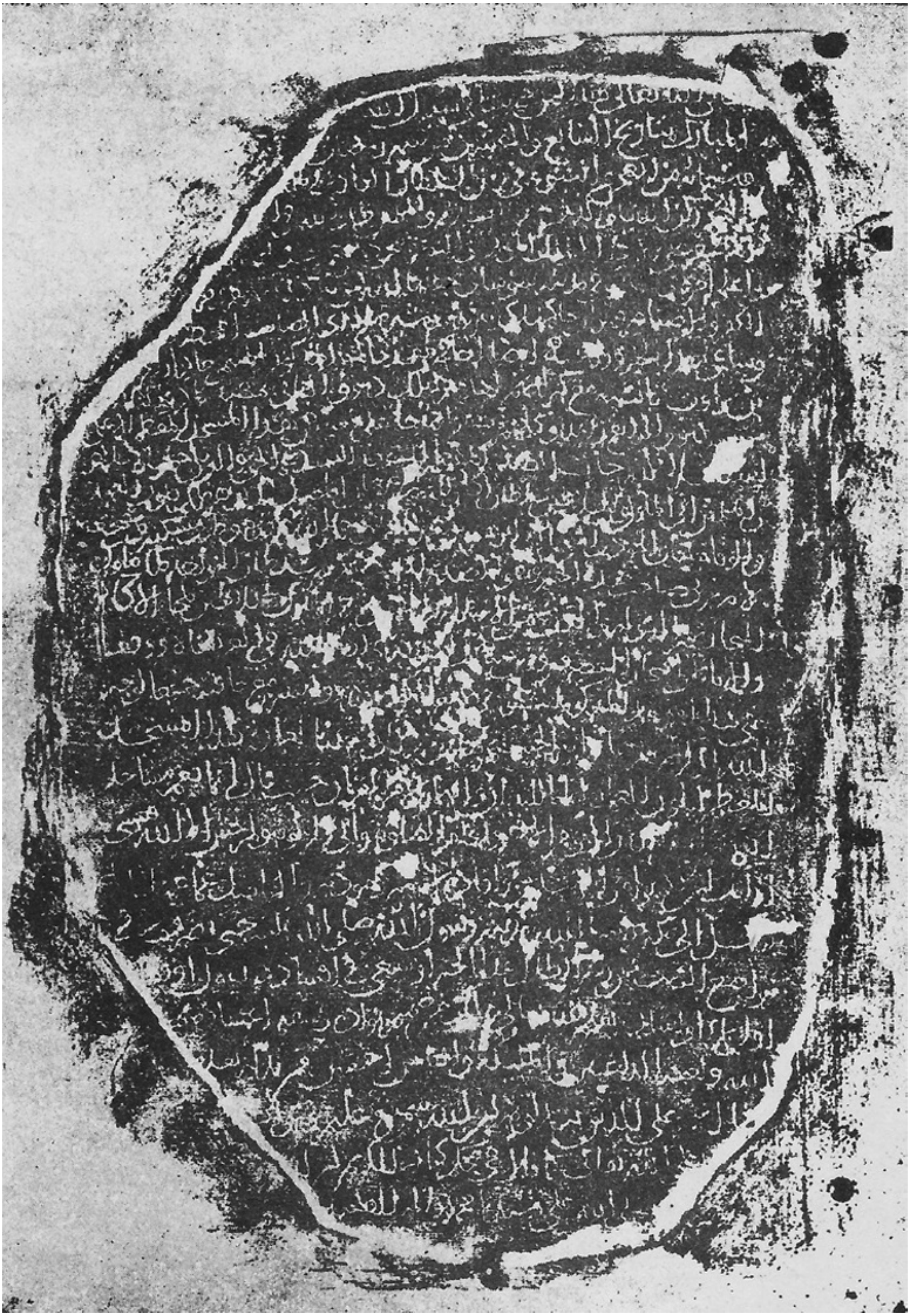

Figure 30.1 Inked rubbing of the Arabic endowment text to the mosque of Firuz al-ʿIraqi built outside Somnath Patan in western India in 662 (1264). Source: Desai 1961: plate IIb. Reproduced with permission.

As its title suggests, this chapter focuses on Muslim communities and their architectural patronage beyond the polity-focused – and often implicitly terrestrially based – frameworks which have dominated much scholarship, it foregrounds instead a world where Muslims lived between empires and polities. This "in between-ness" was instantiated first and foremost through the operation of such communities as largely self-administering entities within non-Islamic polities. But particularly in South Asia we can also think of these communities as "in-betweeners" in a diachronic sense, since in many cases the resident Muslim communities of a single location passed in and out of successive Indic and Islamic polities as these expanded or contracted across the subcontinent.

During the period under discussion here long-established Muslim communities across western India were durably incorporated into the Delhi Sultanate of the Khalajis (r. 1290–1320), later passing into the independent Sultanates of Gujarat and Malwa (founded in 1411 and 1392, respectively). Khalaji and later Tughluq (r. 1321–1398) expansion through the Deccan to the very tip of southern India brought similar encounters, however, while the central Deccan was secured and became home to a succession of major Sultanates beginning with that of the Bahmanis (from 1347 onwards), during the period discussed here Muslim communities in the western coastal belt, the southern Deccan, and the Tamil south mainly existed semi-autonomously within Indic polities. As Wagoner's study of transcultural political elites in the Deccan demonstrates, many individuals, both Muslim and non-Muslim, also moved freely between "Hindu" and "Islamic" polities, in effect dissolving these categories (Wagoner 1999).

In addition to its concern with communities that existed between political formations, this chapter also foregrounds an ocean-centered world where the maritime connections along and between coastal areas were often stronger and more influential than the land or river connections between coasts and inland centers. Seen from this perspective, the previously peripheral coasts and islands of the Indian Ocean become central interfaces in the complex webs of people, animals, things, and ideas which circulated here. This ocean-centered perspective usefully complicates ideas of territory and frontier, sovereignty and agency, bringing new administrative and governmental structures to the forefront alongside new agencies in this particular regional context.

Islamic Landscapes beyond the Lands of Islam

In 1264 Somnath was home to thriving local Muslim communities including recent arrivals from the Islamic west, local converts, and long established, substantially acculturated groups. The Sanskrit text gives us a glimpse of these, listing the various *jamatha*s – a Sanskritized rendering of the Arabic term *jamaʿa*, designating in this context a congregation or group that prays together – that were to be involved in maintaining the mosque. Somnath's congregations are identified by occupation and include ship-owners and sailors, oil-dealers, whitewashers, and landowners (Sircar 1961–1962: 145); no doubt various sects of Islam were also present. Firuz's own father had come to India from the Gulf island emporium of Hormuz, one of many merchants drawn further into the Indian Ocean world by the Mongol conquests of Iran and Syro-Mesopotamia in the middle of the thirteenth century. Iran's incorporation into the pan-Eurasian empire of the Mongols impacted profoundly on the movement and circulation of people and products across this area, by both land and sea. The Iranian *nisba*s – in onomastics, an adjective used at the end of names to signal person's place of origin, tribal affiliation, or other identifying characteristic – recorded in Islamic inscriptions from port-cities such as Somnath and Cambay testify to a surge particularly in Iranian incomers to South Asia from the mid-thirteenth century (Lambourn 2004). Initially South Asia offered refuge from the violent upheavals of the Mongol conquests, but, as Ilkhanid Iran settled into the greater Mongol Empire, the new "global" connections this facilitated encouraged long-distance mobility and trade. Iranian merchant princes related to the rulers of Qaʾis, the Gulf's other great island emporium, served as viziers and port administrators to the south Indian Pandya kingdom but also fronted Ilkhanid embassies to China (Shokoohy 2003: 24; Lambourn 2016). Both the Sanskrit and Arabic texts of Firuz's endowment at Somnath similarly mark this community's position between polities, invoking both the rule and administrative apparatus of the local Chalukya Vaghelas as well as the Sunni Muslim Amir Rukn al-Din, known more commonly in the sources as Mahmud Qalhati, the ruler of Hormuz (r. *c.* 1243–1278) and a Mongol vassal (Desai 1961: 14; Sircar 1961–1962: 142, 143). Thus the thriving, diverse Muslim communities of Somnath revealed in such detail through this inscription belonged to a far larger South Asian Muslim landscape, beyond the frontiers of the Delhi Sultanate to the north, with its own complex international networks.

An exceptional document gives a unique snapshot of this larger landscape and its connections. Issued by the customs house at Aden sometime in the mid-1290s, the document lists stipends paid by the Rasulid rulers of the Yemen and Hadramaut (r. 1229–1454) to *qadi*s (judges) and *khatib*s (preachers) at Friday mosques all around South Asia; in total 42, mainly coastal, locations are listed from Kutch in the west via the Jaffna peninsula to northern Tamil Nadu (Lambourn 2008). Naturally, this snapshot is weighted from a Yemeni perspective and lists only those locations with Muslim communities who maintained religious and commercial relations with the Rasulids, a Sunni dynasty descended from a Turkmen/Oghuz chief, while omitting many well-established communities like those at Somnath that held other allegiances. The inland town of Junagadh in western India is also omitted, but its mosque, built in 685 (1286–1287) by another Iranian patron over the site of an earlier rock-cut cave, hints at an Islamic landscape that was even more diverse, densely peopled, and connected than this single Rasulid source suggests (see Figure 30.2) (Chattopadhyaya 1998; Patel 2008b).

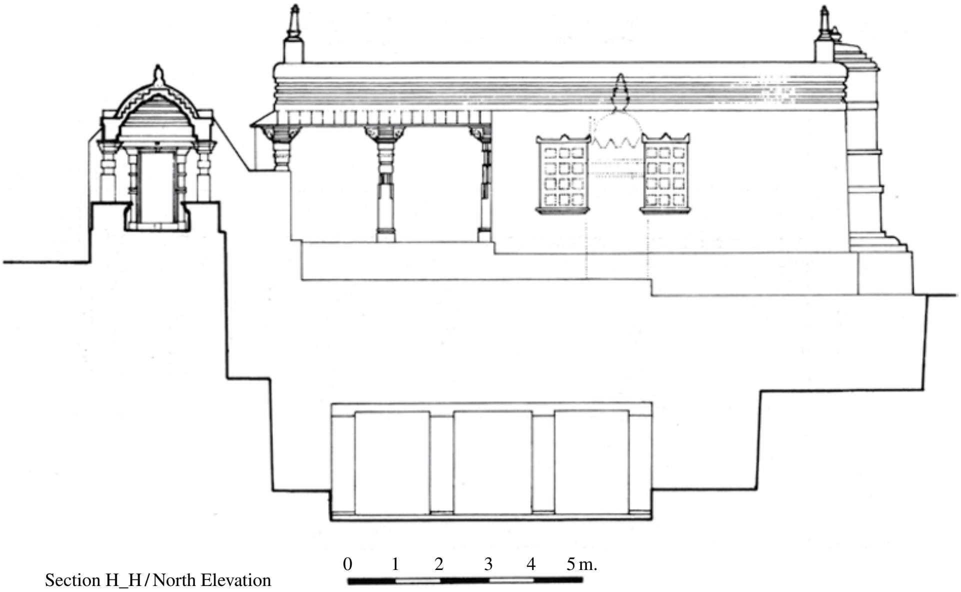

FIGURE 30.2 Longitudinal section of the mosque of al-Idhaji at Junagadh in western India, dated by its foundation inscription to 685 (1286–1287). The section shows the northern entrance gateway and the main mosque with its portico and prayer hall, together with the earlier cave in the bedrock below. Source: Shokoohy 1988: figure 39. Reproduced with permission.

These Muslim communities enjoyed a substantial degree of self-governance in religious, judicial, and administrative matters. Since the very first century of Islam Muslims had sojourned, settled, and intermarried well beyond the borders of the new Islamic commonwealth and there, beyond the Dar al-Islam, they had developed institutional practices for operating as self-governing communities. One of the clearest accounts of these practices comes from Ibn Hawqal's *Kitab Surat al-Ard* (The Book of the Form of the Earth) completed in 976, which describes how, in the kingdom of the Rastrakutas in western and central India, "Muslims live there and only a Muslim has authority over them, who the ruling Balhara puts in his place over them,"[2] while in its main cities of Qamhul, Sindan, Saymur, and Kinbaya "there are Friday mosques (*jamiʿ*) and the Muslim institutions of law (*ahkam*) are practiced openly."[3] Several earlier sources refer similarly to the important role of the "head of the Muslims" (*raʾis al-muslimin*), in India and also in China. But among them, Ibn Hawqal's account is the most helpful for the way he sets these practices in a pan-Islamic framework. For Ibn Hawqal it was quite clear that this was a "custom" (*ʿadat*) that he had "observed in numerous frontier regions where power is in infidel hands, such as the country of the Khazars, the Sarir and the Alains [in the Caucasus], as well as in Ghana and Kugha [in West Africa]."[4] These customs in fact represented a continuation of well-established late antique practices of community autonomy and legal extraterritoriality, the idea that faith communities operated semi-autonomously and that communal law traveled with individuals, taking precedence over the law of the lands where they resided in all but exceptional cases.

Their status within and yet without the non-Islamic polities which hosted them afforded many of these Muslim communities a niche position, one which many exploited to become valued intermediaries between different political, economic, and cultural systems. If Muslims in India only accepted another Muslim as their head, that individual was appointed in negotiation with local power holders; indeed, as the example of Qaʾis shows, West Asians were often integrated into Indic administrations. These local entanglements were often counterbalanced by simultaneous relationships with Islamic polities. Many Sunni communities used the Friday sermon (*khutba*) as an opportunity to cite not only the name of the Abbasid caliph, or after his murder by the Mongols in 1258 his perceived successor residing in Mamluk Cairo (where "pseudo caliphs" descending from the last caliph of Baghdad were stationed), but that of a particular current Muslim ruler with whom they wished to maintain political and economic relations. The list of stipends issued by the Rasulids to officials at Friday mosques all around South Asia probably reflects such a "*khutba* network" and examples of this practice have been documented from the mid-ninth century in the eastern Chinese ports through to western India (Lambourn 2008, 2011). Diplomatic exchanges added another layer of connectivity to this landscape with members of Muslim mercantile elites frequently serving as envoys. By the thirteenth century, all around the Indian Ocean from East Africa to eastern China, substantial Muslim communities were established with by now developed headship and legal systems, complex relationships to their hosts and neighboring Islamic polities, and, it goes without saying, rich material cultures. Occasionally, these Muslim communities grew sufficiently powerful to declare their independence under self-appointed rulers; however, this pattern is more typical of East Africa and Southeast Asia than South Asia and the Far East.

Mosques and the Islamic Landscape of South Asia

From the first, mosques emerge as central markers in the landscapes of Muslim communities in South Asia. The Arab geographers of the tenth century underlined not only the autonomy of these communities but also the presence, indeed the materiality, of their mosques. Ibn Hawqal's list of towns where mosques are to be found is followed by a more developed description of their activity "where they celebrate Friday prayers; they call to prayer with the *adhan* from minarets and publicly recite the *takbir* and the *tahlil* [the phrases *Allahu akbar* and *la illaha illa Allah*, asserting the greatness and unicity of God]."[5] In a similar vein, al-Masʿudi (d. 956) earlier underlined the monumentality of these structures, noting that in the kingdom of the Rashtrakuta rajas Muslims "have built mosques (*masajid mabniyya*) and constructed Friday mosques (*jawamiʿ maʿmura*) for the five prayers" (al-Masʿudi 1965–1979: vol. 1, 202). When we remember that the mosque is, in essence, a space for prayer, it is clear that al-Masʿudi wished to emphasize the constructed, architectural character of these Indian mosques. These descriptions are, of course, partly tropes that present mosques as part of a repertory of material, visual, and auditory signs of Islam in India. Nevertheless, this repeated emphasis on the mosque should also be read as evidence for its very real centrality in environments where Islamic architectural patronage found itself constrained by the complexities of land ownership and access to building materials and labor.

Many of the building types we normally associate with later Islamic urbanism such as madrasas, caravanserais, baths, or markets (Grabar 2006a: 109, 113–114, 2006b: 163–166) were not patronized by these South Asian Muslim communities. Although specialized institutions such as Sufi *khanqah*s and shrines are known, there is much to suggest that the primary focus of Muslim architectural patronage in this environment was on mosques built as multifunctional community structures. Illustrating the constraints on land use faced by Muslim communities in South Asia, mosques even structured that other defining feature of Islamic settlement, the cemetery. Many of these mosques are still surrounded by ancient graveyards, an urban pattern uncommon in the central Islamic lands or North Africa. The Somnath mosque itself may have served in part as a funerary mosque to the memory of Firuz's father and the endowment made specific provision for the celebration of the *Baratishabi*, a Sanskritization of the Persian *Shab-i barat*, the night of the fourteenth of *Shaʿban* when Muslims traditionally pray for the deceased (Sircar 1961–1962: 144). The centrality of mosques here recalls their role during the very earliest years of the new faith when mosques anchored the new Muslim community socially and politically as much as religiously, offering spaces for teaching, law courts, tax collection, and a multiplicity of other activities sometimes as mundane as resting and sleeping (Masdjid 2013). Thus, the particular conditions of life outside the limits of Islam may have helped to maintain the central position of the Friday mosque when elsewhere in the Islamic world, notably in the Delhi Sultanate and the Seljuq successor states, new building types were being developed to accommodate specific activities and neighborhood mosques were becoming ever more important.

Although Firuz's mosque at Somnath has not survived, over the last 30 years pioneering survey work across South Asia has brought to light a number of standing structures associated with the patronage of such semi-autonomous Muslim communities. Like the communities they belonged to, these monuments are distributed across the region and span a remarkable eight centuries from the twelfth to nineteenth centuries. Mehrdad Shokoohy has been a particular pioneer in this field and the some 28 structures he has identified consist principally of mosques, with a smaller number of mausolea and shrines (Shokoohy 1988, 2003). Other structures include the small mosque built in 1439 at Vijayanagara, the capital of the Hindu Deccani kingdom of the same name, by one of the kingdom's many Muslim courtiers "the warrior Ahmad Khan" (Wagoner 1999).

Mosque architecture has always embraced local vernaculars and these structures are no different. Built within the regional vernaculars of their time and place, they are hugely variable in terms of materials, techniques, plan and elevation, degree and style of decoration, and ancillary structures such as ablution facilities, porches, and mausolea.[6] Combined with the diverse histories of the Muslim communities of each location, this has inevitably made for a heterogeneous and complex architectural corpus whose study is beset by challenges. In contrast to East Africa, the very earliest Indian mosques as described by al-Masʿudi and others have yet to be identified and excavated. The earliest standing structures identified so far are two mosques and a shrine of the mid-twelfth to early thirteenth centuries at the port of Bhadreshvar in Kutch, on the coast of northwestern India (Shokoohy 1988). Discussions of stylistic or technical developments are also hampered by the small number of surviving structures.

There is a world of difference, and initially little apparent relationship, between the single story, flat roofed stone mosque built at Junagadh in 685 (1286–1287) (see Figure 30.2) – with its almost spartan decoration and simple incised foundation inscription – and the much extended timber-built Friday mosque at Calicut (see Figure 30.3). The latter is an originally fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century foundation substantially renovated in 1480–1481, with a characteristically Keralan multistoried superstructure of pitched roofs and elaborately carved and inscribed interior decoration (see Figure 30.4). Only the absence of any internal courtyard or tower minaret, and their trabeate construction, seems to link the two structures; and, of course, their comparatively small size, an obvious indication of the size of the resident Muslim populations they served.[7] With a prayer hall of 8.5 × 6.5 m, the Junagadh mosque would have accommodated around 55 worshippers; the 10 × 16 m long prayer hall at the core of the Calicut Friday mosque around 160 worshippers (Figure 30.2, Figure 30.3, Figure 30.4). Nevertheless, the identification of these mosques brings important new data for the history of Muslims in South Asia (Shokoohy 1988).

South Asian Mosques beyond Hypostyle Paradigms

Structures such as the Junagadh mosque and the Calicut Friday mosque are important reminders that the hypostyle or so-called Arab plan mosque and the tower minaret, so often thought of as two quintessential features of mosque architecture, are regionally and temporally specific. Although these two features had become commonplace across much of South Asia by the seventeenth century, theirs is a history of gradual introduction and uneven adoption that begins properly only with the Ghurid conquest in the late twelfth century and such seminal

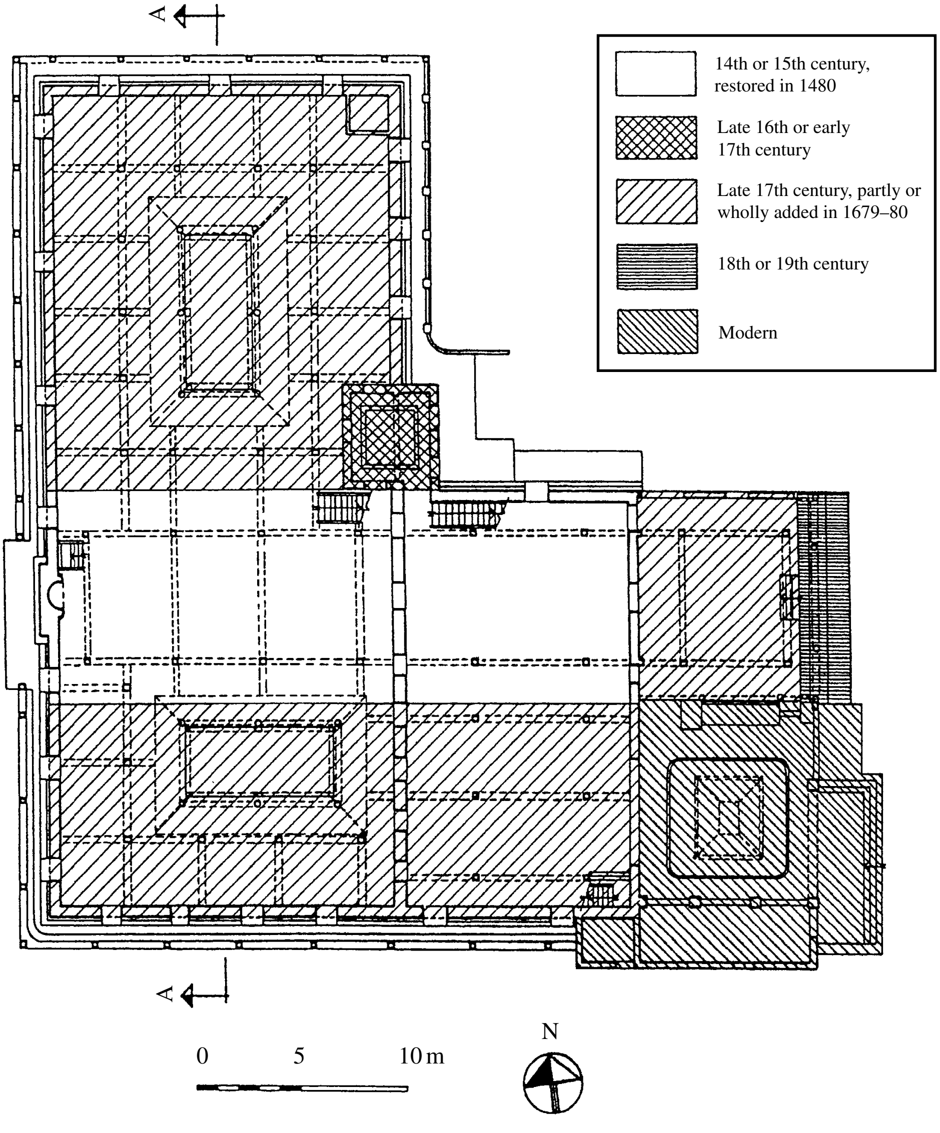
A
14th or 15th century, restored in 1480
Late 16th or early 17th century
Late 17th century, partly or wholly added in 1679–80
18th or 19th century
Modern
A
N
0 5 10 m

FIGURE 30.3 Ground plan of the Friday mosque at Calicut, Kerala, showing the expansion of the mosque around the original fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century prayer hall and "antechamber." Source: Shokoohy 2003: figure 6.21. Reproduced with permission.

structures as the Friday mosque and Qutb Minar of Delhi (1192 and later) (Flood 2008; 2009). Other forms such as the four-iwan mosque type, the predominant form in the eastern Islamic regions after the Mongols, remained foreign to South Asia.

The mosques of South Asia's coastal communities may appear exotic and "other" when set against the "benchmark" of the large hypostyle mosque, but

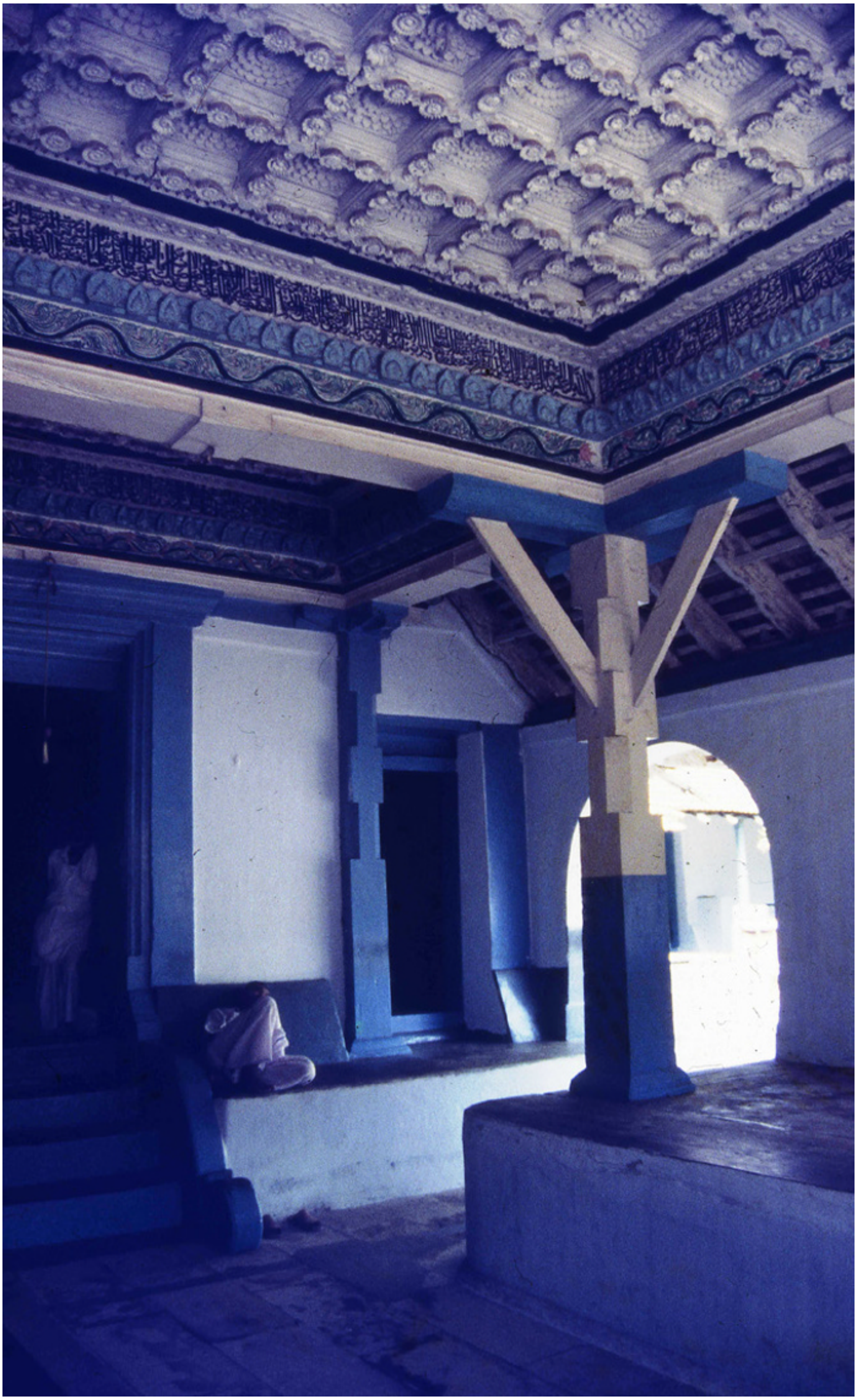

Figure 30.4 View of the porch or *dihliz* with seating platforms built on to the "antechamber" of the Friday mosque at Calicut, dated by its foundation inscription to 1090 (1679–1680). Photograph by the author.

they find a natural home among a huge body of mosques across the Islamic world built outside the hypostyle tradition. While regions such as Anatolia developed non-hypostyle mosque architectures on a monumental scale and with tower minarets, the South Asian examples can be better understood as part of a large and under-researched corpus of smaller, sometimes materially modest, mosques built to serve both smaller settlements and neighborhoods, and private individuals and families. These small mosques are generally closed spaces with a variable number of internal supports, sometimes none, and naturally no inner courtyard. Many were also built within local vernaculars and they demonstrate a corresponding variability in plan and elevation, material, and building techniques: near-square prayer halls, some nine-bayed, are frequent, but rectangular halls set both perpendicular to the qibla and parallel to it also exist. Some had side rooms, others external courtyards, or a mixture of these, more rarely, some had porches. Generally, these smaller mosques lacked tower minarets although several feature staircase minarets, simple flights of stairs leading to the roof.

There is not space here to list all known examples, but these mosques are present from the first century of Islam and across the Islamic world, if usually hidden in the footnotes and appendices of the discipline.[8] In this context one might usefully cite the 10 small mosques dating from the ninth to twelfth centuries identified at Siraf on the Gulf and which in this case functioned in complement to the port's large hypostyle plan Friday mosque. Their location next to large merchants' houses, rows of shops, public baths, or necropolises perfectly exemplifies the private, neighborhood, or funerary uses of such structures (Whitehouse 1980). In early Arab Sind small mosques also functioned alongside large hypostyle Friday mosques (Flood 2009: 44–46). In Yemen, so-called cubical mosques (almost perfect cubes with flat roofs supported by anything from two to six exceptionally tall internal columns) follow local pre-Islamic temple models and were often built as Friday mosques (Finster 1992). In East Africa too, a wide variety of smaller structures without central courtyards served as mosques and Friday mosques (Kirkman 1966) with our earliest and best evidence coming from the site of Shanga on the Kenyan coast (Horton 1996). Southeast Asia also developed a rich variety of often monumental alternatives to the hypostyle plan mosque. In these regions then, Friday mosques were designated as such in other ways – by their scale or simply the presence of a preacher (*khatib*) and a pulpit (*minbar*).

Collectively these mosques offer a vital counter-narrative to the dominant hypostyle paradigm, complicating any simple equation between the hypostyle plan Friday mosques and the political symbolism of Islamic rule.[9] In many locations, such as Siraf or in Sind, these small mosques did operate alongside large hypostyle Friday mosques, as they had throughout the Dar al-Islam from the very beginning. But in the Yemen, as also in South Asia and East Africa, the hypostyle plan was not widely adopted, and then only slowly, with a variety of closed plans serving for both *masjids* (neighborhood mosques) and Friday mosques. Notwithstanding the Sindi examples and in spite of regular interchanges with the central Islamic lands and later the Delhi Sultanate itself, semi-autonomous Muslim communities in Hind proper largely eschewed both the hypostyle plan and the tower minaret. As we have seen, only in mid-twelfth century Bhadresvar were two attempts made to translate the hypostyle plan to the local western Indian vernacular (Shokoohy 1988). Little comparative work has been carried out on these smaller, non-hypostyle mosques and, while it is possible to construct pan-Islamic typologies and genealogies in certain instances, evidence from Yemen and other areas reminds us that many regional types were rooted in local pre-Islamic vernaculars. This is also the case in South Asia (Figure 30.5).

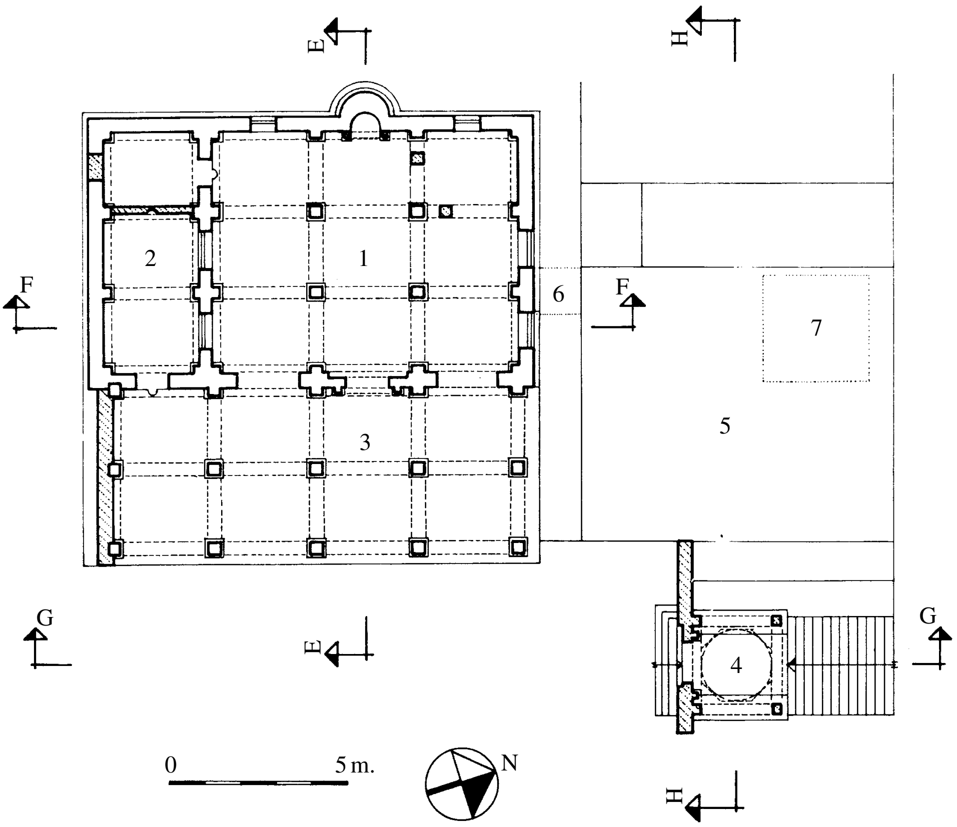

FIGURE 30.5 Site plan of the mosque of al-Idhaji at Junagadh, 685 (1286–1287) showing 1. prayer hall, 2. secondary chamber, 3. portico, 4. northern gateway, 5. lower courtyard, 6. domed pavilion attached to mosque, 7. domed pavilion in courtyard of cave. Source: Shokoohy 1988: figure 36. Reproduced with permission.

Early South Asian Mosques and Indic Spatialities

South Asianists have underlined the need to think in terms of a “double movement” between the wider world of Islam and the cultures of South Asia and these coastal mosques are no exception. Running across their remarkable heterogeneity Shokoohy noted an equally remarkable shared spatial organization (Shokoohy 2003: 247). In both the Junagadh mosque and the Calicut Friday mosque, the prayer hall is preceded by a spatially and structurally distinct unit. At Junagadh this consists of an open columned “portico” (see Figure 30.5), whereas in the original core of the Calicut mosque, this was a separate closed “antechamber” (see Figure 30.3). In spite of the very diverse elevations and construction materials seen in these two examples, each establishes a strong central axis, perpendicular to the qibla, and also creates an intermediary transitional space between the prayer hall and the exterior of the mosque. At Calicut this spatial organization and axiality was amplified later in the seventeenth century by the addition of a further “porch.” While this single parallel is unconvincing by itself, the same spatial organization appears consistently in all the mosques surveyed by Shokoohy, from the earliest mid-twelfth-century structures at Bhadresvar into the nineteenth-century mosques of Tamil Nadu. Although not included in this survey, similar spatial patterns are seen in Bengali (Shokoohy 2003: 131) and Maldivian mosques. Only the mosque of Ahmad Khan at Vijayanagara dispenses with this transitional space; its main prayer hall of 15 bays faces out directly onto an open enclosure in which were located a number of ring wells which provided water for ablutions and drinking (Wagoner 1999: fig. 1). Nevertheless, this spatial feature can be described as a truly pan-Indic feature. While there are plentiful opportunities to set individual porticoes or antechambers within their particular local contexts (Patel 2004: 110–112; Shokoohy 1988: 21), it is the pan-Indic spread of this spatiality and its implications for the idea of a distinctive Indic mosque space that deserve focus.

Porticoes and antechambers are unusual in the mosque architecture of the central Islamic lands, making searches for Islamic genealogies unsatisfactory. Rare early examples include Qusayr Hallabat (720s) and Khirbat al-Mafjar (740s) in Jordan and the Bu Fatata Mosque in Sousse (838–841) (Creswell 1989: figs. 95, 100, 226); while the Mosque of al-Salih Tala᾿i in Cairo (1154) presents a later example of a hypostyle mosque with fronting portico. By contrast, porticoes and antechambers are intrinsic to Indic ritual space, in even the smallest temple, the *garbagriha* or closed sanctum housing the deity is commonly fronted by a portico or columned hall which structures the devotee’s approach of the deity and mediates between ritual and non-ritual space. The idea is so fundamental to Indic rituality that it is rarely highlighted in academic discussions, although it is amply evidenced in temples across the subcontinent (see, e.g., Meister 1983–2001).

The translation of antechambers and porticoes into Indic mosque architecture inevitably transferred the form’s directional and mediatory potential, whether built as a closed antechamber or open portico, these spaces establish a strong central axis, perpendicular to the qibla, while simultaneously underlining the separateness of the prayer hall itself. The contrast with East African mosques is important here: multiple porticoes, often termed "verandas," are common in East Africa, yet they are generally positioned to the sides of the prayer hall, breaking the central axis, and frequently house ablution facilities (Kirkman 1966).

The closed prayer halls of the Indian mosques clearly differ from *garbagrihas* of Hindu temples in many respects: *garbagriha*s house an embodied deity and are the exclusive preserve of a priestly elite, prayer halls accommodate congregational worship and the figuration of animate beings is prohibited in them; the first are small, dark, and accessed only through a single entrance, the second are larger and have multiple entrances. The most direct Indic models for these prayer halls are in fact *mandapas* or pillared halls and it is no accident that Ahmad Khan's mosque at Vijayanagara should correspond to the *dhanamandapa* type (Wagoner 1999: 256). Yet with their closed exterior walls and axial approaches, these small prayer halls also preserve much of the ritual, bounded character of the *garbagriha*. By contrast, the hypostyle plan imposed an altogether different spatial sequence with a less clearly demarcated ritual core and this may explain the form's slower adoption in South Asia and indeed its singular Indic translation. The prayer hall façade screens that became a hallmark of Sultanate hypostyle mosques (in the Friday mosques of Ajmir, Delhi, and Khambhat in north India, for example) can, from this perspective, be read as attempts to re-enclose the qibla prayer hall and reinforce the separateness of the ritual core (Flood 2008; 2009). These spatial translations forged a common Indic ritual spatiality that crossed religious and ritual differences.

The translation of this spatiality is perhaps not surprising given that Islamic ritual buildings were commonly constructed by Hindu architects and craftsmen. However, the wide application of the concept and its maintenance over centuries of mosque construction in South Asia indicates that it responded to Muslim usage and expectations. Currently, we have little historical evidence for how this spatiality structured the worship and life of Muslim communities in practice. Subsidiary mihrabs in the porticoes of both Bhadresvar mosques suggest that these were used for formal prayer and, in an environment where the Muslim population fluctuated wildly according to the sailing season, these porticoes may have played an important role in accommodating surplus worshippers. In Ottoman mosques these spaces, which also often feature mihrabs of their own, are known as "space for late arrivers" (*son cemaat yeri*). However, only at Bhadresvar are porticoes provided with their own mihrabs and we must ask what other functions or expectations such spaces met. The porch added to the Calicut mosque in the seventeenth century leads directly off the street and is described in its own inscription by the Persian term *dihliz* (Shokoohy 2003: 179) – literally "a place between two gates" – used to designate a vestibule or entrance hall. It, and many other Malabari entrance porches, have raised seating platforms which provide quiet, cool places to rest or watch the street and reinforce the social role of the mosque (see Figure 30.4). However, the function of the earlier antechamber behind it remains unclear and these spaces might have accommodated a wide range of activities. The fact that foundation or sometimes renovation inscriptions are commonly positioned in these spaces, often over the doorways into the prayer hall, reinforces their semi-public character, but generally they do not elucidate their function.

The problem of what porticoes and antechambers "were for" is only a small part of the larger problem of understanding the social life of these mosque complexes, and complexes they were. Al-Idhaji's "mosque" at Junagadh in Saurashtra includes an entrance gateway, two small pavilions as well as a lower courtyard incorporating an earlier, probably Buddhist, rock-cut hall. The main bipartite structure of the original Calicut mosque also included an encircling outer colonnade, built under the deep overhang of its sloping roofs, and there are graves dotted around the structure, but the whole was clearly positioned on a larger plot of land, the early occupation of which is unknown. On the model of later Tamil (Shokoohy 2003: 33, fig. 2.5) and Maldivian mosques we can infer that the Calicut mosque was probably part of an enclosed multistructure complex now lost under further extensions. Surviving Malabari mosques have also expanded upwards into their roofs, and at Calicut Shokoohy was able to record some of the ways these spaces were used, at least in living memory, such as for the administrative offices of *qadi*s and imams, as storerooms, for gatherings and public discussions, and, in one case, as a madrasa (Shokoohy 2003: 169, 193). However, the existing superstructures are much later than the original foundations and we cannot assume that Malabari mosques have always had multistoried roofs. The Maldivian mosques to which they are closely related are single story, as are many smaller temples.

Future ethnographic research and archaeology will reveal more about the social lives of mosques built for Muslims outside the lands of Islam and their architectural consequences. Nevertheless, even at this early stage it is clear that the persistent coupling of porticoes and antechambers with closed prayer halls continued deeply embedded Indic notions of sacred and ritual space, making this a unique translation of mosque architecture to the Indic environment.[10] The extent to which the mosque had become Indian is illustrated by several medieval Indian architectural treatises (*shastras*) which include chapters on the *Rahmana prasada* (temple of [al-]Rahman), that is, the temple of the Merciful, both a name and quality of God, according to the Qur'an (Patel 2004).

Architectural Patronage beyond the Lands of Islam

The strong local rootedness that makes these mosques such a heterogeneous corpus and complicates comparative discussion is, of course, also a remarkable shared trait that raises important questions about the nature of patronage and architectural agency in this environment. At first glance, the character of the resulting architecture is unsurprising, logistically it is simplest to build with local materials, manpower, and technologies. As the Indian *shastra* on the *Rahmana* *prasada* advises, a reorientation to the qibla, the insertion of a mihrab, and a careful filtering of the decorative repertoire sufficed to make a functioning mosque within the indigenous architectural tradition. Yet this simple narrative is contradicted by other fields of contemporary cultural production in South Asia, for example, Islamic grave memorials and inscriptions, where Muslim merchant patrons demonstrated their understanding of, and ability to implement, a variety of non-Indic models and cultural concepts (Lambourn 2004). The wider Indian Ocean also presents some remarkable architectural transplants – a South Indian Shiva temple in late thirteenth-century Quanzhou, a Mamluk gateway and façade on a fourteenth-century mosque in the same port, a Chinese Buddhist pagoda at Nagapattinam, and a hybrid East African–Yemeni–Indian mosque in Mogadishu. We should, therefore, be wary of assuming that merchant patrons had neither taste nor the agency to effect it. Against this background, how should we understand the conservatism of the mosque architectures under discussion?

As Wagoner's analysis of Ahmad Khan's mosque and its Kannada language foundation inscription demonstrates, the establishment of a mosque outside an Islamic polity was "a complex social event" (Wagoner 1999: 254) involving multiple agents including the patron, the community of mosque users, the Vijayanagara ruler Devaraya for whose merit the building was stated to be established, and those whom Wagoner terms "productive agents," here the artisan-builders and the author and engraver of the inscription. At Somnath only the Arabic and Sanskrit inscriptions survive to map these processes, but they do so in unprecedented detail, outlining the collaborations between the patron, the user communities, local administrative structures, corporate bodies, and partners. Royal approval notwithstanding, it is clear that the true agents here were local; they included Somnath's board of administrators (*panchakula*) (Sircar 1961–1962: 142), its governor (*hakim*), and his advisor (*mushir*) (Desai 1961: 14). However, even more prominent are the many temple administrators and private individuals who intervened to facilitate the acquisition of the land, the construction of the mosque proper, and the establishment of revenue sources to ensure the structure's daily operation and long-term upkeep. A private individual, Chadda Rawat, or Raja Sri Chadda as he is called in Sanskrit, negotiated the acquisition of the land for the mosque, possibly from the estate of the great Somnath temple itself. It was Chadda again who assisted Firuz in the actual construction of the mosque, presumably in providing access to an architect, workmen, and materials (Sircar 1961–1962: 143). We may guess that Chadda and Firuz were business partners and the two may well have been friends, but Firuz's patronage would have been impossible without an even wider local support base. As the Arabic text itself records, it was Chadda and four other non-Muslim local power players who "made efforts for this meritorious deed and allowed it" (Desai 1961: 14). Various local temples and seven private, non-Muslim individuals also donated real estate whose revenues were to contribute to the running and maintenance of the communal mosque (Sircar 1961–1962: 143–145).

Once captured, this pyramid of local consultations, negotiations, and legal transactions raises profound questions about the identity and agency of "patrons" as well as the social and material benefits of that patronage in the Indic world. It is difficult to see either Firuz or Ahmad Khan as anything other than the nominal patrons of "their" mosques, instigators of the original idea but by no means the only, or even the prime, movers in their establishment. Indeed, as the head of the local Muslim community (*sadr*) Firuz may well have acted less as a private patron and more as the formal representative of that community in its local negotiations. The key role of that appointment in western India appears to be confirmed by the foundation inscription of the Junagadh mosque. The merchant al-Idhaji who "ordered" (*amara-bi*) its construction was also a *sadr* and very likely the head of that particular community (Desai 1961: 18–19), here too his apparent agency probably obscures a similarly complex pyramid of entanglements. But we might also consider the many non-Muslims who participated in these processes to have been every bit as much "patrons." At Somnath in particular, this patronage is very close to Indic models involving multiple donees, rather than the monolithic, individual patronage so prominent in the Islamic world.

These complex processes and the collaborative nature of patronage must have restricted individual agencies. The complexity of acquiring land may explain why graveyards cluster around these coastal mosques in such a distinctive pattern, maximizing the use of land already under Muslim control. Perhaps it also explains why, as much as they moved outwards, Malabari mosques also expanded upwards into their roof spaces. But beyond this, Muslim individuals and communities may have found little space to introduce new designs and models even if they wished to do so, let alone to bring in craftsmen or architects from outside the local guild. If patrons aspired to larger mosques on different models, we have no trace of this frustrated agency; however, the local rootedness of these architectures may speak for itself. In this environment, the elements that were introduced and retained within the regional vernaculars signal a very deliberate architectural action. Shokoohy has underlined how the predominance of semicircular mihrab plans in this architecture signals early connections to the Middle East and contrasts with the use of square plan mihrabs in the Iranian and Central Asian world (Shokoohy 1988: 40). Flood has also commented on the attention paid to producing the arch form, whether for mihrabs or doorways, noting how "the endeavor to evoke the arched form in the mosques and shrines of Muslim communities [...] suggests an association between specific formal values and cultural identity" (Flood 2009: 48). The presence of Arabic language inscriptions in these structures represents another important and consistent area of innovation, which is equally assertive of wider belongings and connections to the Islamic world (Lambourn 2004).

In the context of life outside the lands of Islam, the most important outcomes of mosque patronage were, in fact, not architectural at all. Religious institutions, be they cathedrals, temples, shrines, or mosques, have always played economic and social roles as important as their more obvious religious and architectural functions. As such, historians of South Asia have explored the way that "the large-scale giving of religious endowments and the subsequent redistribution of economic resources and honours back to the community" served to interconnect various strata of medieval society (Talbot 2001: 99). The easy observations of the early Arab geographers, that "there are mosques" in India, belie the complexity and variety of processes behind each individual structure. The Somnath endowments illustrate how even small foundations built on and tested a number of local social networks, administrative and legal infrastructures, ultimately strengthening ties between communities and, indirectly, trade. In the case of the Vijayanagara mosque, Wagoner has demonstrated how its dedication to Devaraya affirmed Ahmad Khan's allegiance, making his act of patronage a "political instrument" also (1999: 255). Both were especially important functions of patronage for recently arrived individuals or communities, or those who, like Ahmad Khan, migrated between polities.

As this discussion shows, at every stage of their making, use and maintenance, material things were loci of cross-cultural encounter in a wider social network. Most obviously, at its heart there is the mosque structure itself, whose construction, habitation, and yearly physical maintenance involved Muslim communities and non-Muslims alike. But we should not forget the distinctive material practices associated with the different legal systems of the communities involved, for example, the Indic practice of "pouring of water" to confirm a legal transaction, nor that the endowed land and buildings contained people and objects now under Muslim administration, or the endowment inscriptions themselves. Even the composition of the opening lines of the Sanskrit text required the author(s) to integrate and explain a new calendrical system, find Indic terminologies to translate other concepts of the divine, and Sanskritize Arabic terms. The Arabic text of Firuz's endowment (see Figure 30.1) itself materializes these negotiations, far removed from contemporary Islamic foundation inscriptions in the length and tenor of its text, as well as its archaic incision technique, it is perhaps closest to its partner Sanskrit endowment. Yet it could not have been produced without the collaboration of the anonymous Arabic speaker who composed and wrote it, and the anonymous local Indian stone carvers who prepared the stone slab, then transferred and incised this text. We can only guess where this inscription was finally erected. Although the temptation to imagine that it was located in the porch of the mosque is overwhelming, wherever it was set, the inscription itself was a visual and material reminder of these entanglements.

It would be naive to imagine that patronage in this environment was not also a locus of tension and misunderstanding. An account of the destruction of the Friday mosque of Cambay by local non-Muslims sometime in the early thirteenth century reminds us of these tensions (Desai 1961: 5). Nevertheless, the mosques established all around the coasts of South Asia testify to the many successful negotiations between communities of different kinds and, with them, the continuing acculturation of Islam to the Indic world (see also Flood 2009: 184–189).

Conclusions and Future Directions

The mosques and urban landscapes of South Asia's Muslim trading communities are an important and rich corpus of Islamic architecture badly neglected by disciplinary and regional biases. Their study generates counter-narratives to many discourses embedded in the field of Islamic art, reminding us of the centrality and polyvalence of the mosque outside the Dar al-Islam, highlighting the importance of non-hypostyle mosque types and alternative models of mosque expansion, challenging ideas about mercantile agency and the functions of religious patronage. If my principal conclusion must be how little we yet know about these mosque architectures and their Muslim communities, perhaps their most concrete contribution in the meantime is to highlight the extraordinary spatial variety and experimentation of South Asian mosques. With the Ghurid conquests of northern India from the 1190s, the hypostyle mosque plan entered South Asia durably (Flood 2008; 2009). First at Delhi and at Ajmer in the north, and later at Somnath and other towns across India, large hypostyle plan Friday mosques came into the urban center, materializing this new political and religious landscape in ways that initially appear to represent a fundamental disjunction with the past. And yet, as already discussed, within the longer time span of Indic Islamic mosque architecture presented here, the Ghurid predilection for screened prayer halls in hypostyle mosques emerges not as an innovation but as a continuation of the separation and self-containment of the prayer hall seen in our earlier, small mosques. Looking across South Asia, we might also profitably question how many other variations around the "classic" hypostyle mosque in fact represent continuities with earlier regional mosque architectures. Might the Ghurid "innovation" of the *muluk khana* (kings' room), a separate space within the prayer hall assigned to the ruler and probably synonymous with the *maqsura* elsewhere, also find earlier Indic Islamic genealogies? And what does the Delhi Qutb Mosque's own attentive, even reverential, preservation of each successive hypostyle structure – a pattern of extension unique to this site – say about the perception and reception of the hypostyle model in northern India?

The Ghurid conquest of South Asia in the late twelfth century encountered a rich and diverse Muslim landscape with long established material cultures; the story of Hindu–Muslim encounter in South Asia is also a story of Islam's encounter with its other selves. The relatively new body of mosque architecture presented here leaves this exciting new field open to the next generation of researchers.

Notes

1 First published by Hultzsch in 1882, the Sanskrit inscription was later re-edited in the early 1960s by D.C. Sircar together with its Arabic partner (see Desai 1961; Sircar 1961–1962). However, the two texts only attracted extensive scholarly attention from the late 1990s onwards, see, among others: Chattopadhyaya 1998: 61–78; Thapar 2004; and Patel 2008b.

2 Author's translation from the Arabic, see Ibn Hawqal 1938: 320.

3 Author's translation, see Ibn Hawqal 1938: 324.
4 Author's translation, see Ibn Hawqal 1938: 320.
5 Author's translation, see Ibn Hawqal 1938: 320.
6 For the most thorough study of this Islamic architecture within local architectural traditions see Patel 2004.
7 Experiments were made to estimate the historical size of Muslim populations based on the size of these mosques, see Shokoohy 2003: 295–298.
8 The revised and extended edition of Creswell's *Short Account* (1989) includes several early examples ranging from the 720s to the 860s, see figs. 78, 95, 99, 100, 133, 174, 226, 236, 224, 251.
9 For helpful attempts to integrate these small mosques into a discussion of long-term Islamic urban developments, see Grabar 2006a, 2006b; and Necipoğlu 2005.
10 In Kerala the same feature is seen in early churches.

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31

The Deccani Sultanates and their Interregional Connections

Phillip B. Wagoner and Laura Weinstein

Before the last decade of the thirteenth century, the interior of the Indian peninsula – the upland plateau known as “the Deccan” – was not yet part of the Islamic world in any meaningful sense, but by the 1330s it had been incorporated into the north Indian sultanate of Delhi under the Tuqhluq dynasty. The Deccan’s abrupt political entry into the Islamic world initiated a period of continual interaction with other Islamic polities. This in turn brought about decisive changes in the visual and material culture of the region, as Islamic objects and forms appeared and proliferated where next to none had existed before.

This chapter takes as its point of departure a series of questions about these interactions and their results. What were the new categories of objects, forms, and built landscapes that appeared in the centuries that followed Delhi’s conquest? When did these new forms appear, and what were their immediate sources? How did they interact with existing forms of the Deccan’s pre-Islamic Indic culture? Most importantly, what were the specific sociopolitical and economic mechanisms through which these new forms and types of objects entered the Deccan and became naturalized in the region?

That it is possible to effectively address these questions today is thanks to a recent proliferation of studies of the social and cultural fabric of the Deccan, brought about by a scholarly reorientation beginning in the 1990s. Whereas most earlier work had reductively framed this region as the site of a violent encounter between Islam and Hinduism, more recent studies have revealed that more often

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than not, it was cultural and political relations, and not religious identities, that determined how communities developed and interacted with one another (Eaton 2000, 2005; Talbot 2001). Our understanding of these relations has been deepened by individual studies focusing on Deccani language and literature (Husain 2000; Green 2004; Eaton 2014), architecture and gardens (Ali and Flatt 2012; Bawa 2002; Michell and Zebrowski 1999; Sardar 2007; Wagoner 2006), and painting (Hutton 2006; Michell and Zebrowksi 1999; Overton 2011; Seyller 1995; Weinstein 2011), as well as by volumes treating many different dimensions of art and culture (Haidar and Sardar 2011; Parodi 2014). Elites moving between courtly societies in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa have been shown to play a critical role in the development of Deccani culture (Eaton 2006; Subrahmanyam 1992; Wagoner 1999), as have the strategic appropriations of the region's pre-Islamic past by rulers of the Deccani sultanates (Eaton and Wagoner 2014; Wagoner 2011). Major exhibitions have further advanced the field's current goals of elucidating the social, cultural, and political dynamics of the Deccan.[1]

In this thematically organized chapter, we focus first on two key political mechanisms—colonization and diplomacy—that contributed substantially to the Islamicization of the region's visual landscape. We then consider economic and social mechanisms, including trade and diaspora. We begin our coverage at *c.* 1300 when the Deccan was first incorporated politically into the Islamic world. Specifically, we draw our examples from the 400-year period between the late thirteenth and late seventeenth centuries, a time bracketed by two conquests of the Deccan by north Indian powers, first by the sultanate of Delhi (1206–1555) and then by the Mughal Empire (1555–1858). Despite the political and cultural differences between these two states, their respective conquests of the Deccan brought about many similar effects on the region's visual landscape, and are thus instructively considered together.

The period of actual colonial control by the Delhi Sultanate's Tughluq dynasty was quite brief (1338–1347), but it brought about profound changes in the culture of the Deccan, which only deepened and expanded during the subsequent period of rule by locally based sultanates. These included the Bahmani Sultanate of Gulbarga and Bidar, which dominated the northern Deccan from 1347 until its collapse around 1500, and its five successor states, of which the most important culturally were the ʿAdil Shahis of Bijapur (1490–1686), the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar (1490–1636), and the Qutb Shahis of Golconda and Hyderabad (1496–1687). These three states were in turn conquered and absorbed by the north Indian Mughal Empire between 1636 and 1687. South of the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers, the lower Deccan was ruled by the powerful kingdom of Vijayanagara (1347–1565), often characterized as a "Hindu" state, but one that had undergone a significant degree of Persianization and saw itself, as did its northern neighbors, as a successor state to the Delhi Sultanate.

Political Mechanisms

Colonization

The phenomenon of colonization is so firmly associated with European domination of Asia, Africa, and the Americas that it is easy to overlook its pre-modern history within non-western societies. States like the Delhi Sultanate were not only imperial in the sense that they were multiethnic polities ruling over diverse regions, but they also depended on colonies of settlers from the metropole as a means of establishing political control in conquered territories. We will here refer to this process as colonization, reserving the term "colonialism" for the specifically modern European form.

The Delhi Sultanate's colonization of the Deccan began with a series of ambitious campaigns that demonstrated Delhi's military superiority and resulted in the collapse of the three Indic polities that had previously dominated the region – the kingdoms of the Yadavas (1187–1318), the Kakatiyas (1163–1323), and the Hoysalas (1192–1342). In the immediate aftermath of these conquests outside settlement of the region was limited, and concerted attempts were made to incorporate defeated local rulers and their subordinates as loyal vassals of Delhi. When this strategy proved unsuccessful, Delhi brought the region under direct rule, settling larger numbers of military and administrative personnel and charging them with the task of imposing north India's Persianate and Islamic political culture upon the region. For a brief period in the 1320s, attempts were even made to transfer the entire population of Delhi to Daulatabad, in response to the southward shift of the sultanate's center of gravity. The forced exodus was disruptive and unpopular among Delhi's citizens, and most eventually returned to Delhi. But this wholesale migration of a broad cross-section of Delhi's population – including not only members of the ruling elite and administrative bureaucrats but also religious figures, merchants, and craftspeople – had a profound effect on the subsequent development of Deccani politics, culture, and art.

Like other colonizing imperial powers, the Delhi Sultanate established its rule not only through military conquest and the transfer of populations but also by introducing new categories of material culture that structured and facilitated preferred forms of social and economic interaction. Phenomena as diverse as coinage, city planning, and building design all provide examples of such materially embodied cultural practices, and all of them helped facilitate the region's political and cultural integration within the larger world of the Delhi Sultanate. Although originally imposed by outside colonists, these forms were soon appropriated by local elites who used them deftly, sometimes to express allegiance to the colonizing regime and at other times to contest its authority, manipulating this shared language of symbolic forms to articulate their claims to an independent political identity.

Coinage provides a particularly vivid example of this process. During the reign of sultan ʿAlaʾ al-Din Khalaji (1296–1316), imperial mints were established at

Devagiri (known as Daulatabad after 1327) and other places in the south, and several of the new coin types issued both there and in Delhi celebrated ʿAlaʾ al-Din as "a second Alexander" (*sikandar al-thani*) in commemoration of his wide-ranging conquests. These *tanka*s were the first locally minted coins to follow Delhi's weight standard of 96 *ratis* (10.8–11 g), which had been the norm for silver *tanka*s since the establishment of the sultanate nearly a century earlier. Fifty years later, when the Bahmanis rebelled and proclaimed their independence from Delhi, they nonetheless continued to follow Delhi's metrology and to emulate its calligraphy-based coin designs. Thus, the Bahmani sultan ʿAlaʾ al-Din Bahman Shah (r. 1347–1358) issued a silver *tanka* that was identical with ʿAlaʾ al-Din Khalaji's "second Alexander" coin in every respect but the name of the sultan, thus contesting Delhi's authority and symbolically proclaiming his own status as an independent sultan. Although subsequent rulers were quick to develop more distinctive legends and designs of their own, the 11 gram weight standard for the silver *tanka* was followed until the end of the fifteenth century, when silver coins ceased to be issued as the Bahmani state was disintegrating (Goron and Goenka 2001: 37–39, 290–310).

In similar fashion, the Deccani cities that were established or transformed by Delhi sultans bear the imprint of modes of organizing urban space that had first been defined in Khurasan in eastern Iran and Islamicate north India. These northern cities are composed of three main components – a public residential and commercial area, a private royal zone off to one side, and a primary religious monument (inevitably a congregational mosque) mediating between the two. The royal zone typically adjoins the public area but is separated from it by imposing stone walls, and the congregational mosque is generally placed just outside the royal area on a main road running between the primary gates of the public area and the royal zone.[2]

This type of arrangement is visible in what remains of Tughluqabad in Delhi, the city founded by the Delhi sultan Ghiyath al-Din Shah (r. 1320–1325) in the early fourteenth century. At this short-lived capital, the congregational mosque is located in the public area with its back toward the royal zone, allowing the ruler direct and private access to the prayer hall. In 1326–1327 when Ghiyath al-Din Shah's son moved his capital to Daulatabad, a pre-conquest Deccani city, this same urban plan was again put to use (Mate and Pathy 1992; Shokoohy and Shokoohy 2007).

As in the case of coinage, this urban model exercised a powerful impact in the Deccan long after the departure of the Tughluqs. During their reign, the reproduction in the Deccan of these patterns of urban space linked the region to Delhi, the seat of power in north India, and reinforced the incorporation of the Deccan into sultanate territory. After the Tughluqs' eclipse, however, local rulers continued to organize their cities according to this plan, using it as a means of asserting their authority as independent sultans within a larger Persianate ecumene. Bahmani cities such as Bidar and Firuzabad, as well as later sites such as the Qutb

Shahi fort-city of Golconda, represent variations on this same basic urban plan. Even when a new city was created on the site of a pre-sultanate settlement, as was the case at the ʿAdil Shahi capital at Bijapur, the new walls and buildings were added in such a way as to bring the existing space into conformity with this common plan.

Two architectural monuments of the Deccan, both established by rulers from north India, show with particular clarity how imported cultural forms contributed to the process of linking the colonized region to the imperial heartland in the north. The first is the Jamiʿ Masjid of Daulatabad, constructed between 1313 and 1318 under the patronage of the Khalaji sultans,[3] and the second is the Bibi ka Maqbara, the tomb built near the city of Aurangabad in 1660–1661 for the wife of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707).

The Jamiʿ Masjid that stands today at Daulatabad (Figure 31.1) closely conforms to a type of mosque – first constructed in northern India by Delhi sultans in the late twelfth century – which has been interpreted as commemorating the conquest and political annexation of new territory. The best known examples of the type may be seen at Delhi, Ajmer, Kaman, and Khatu, all of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. These mosques share several distinctive features, including their establishment on the site of an earlier Hindu or Jain temple, their extensive use of architectural components taken from the temple, their stacking of columns

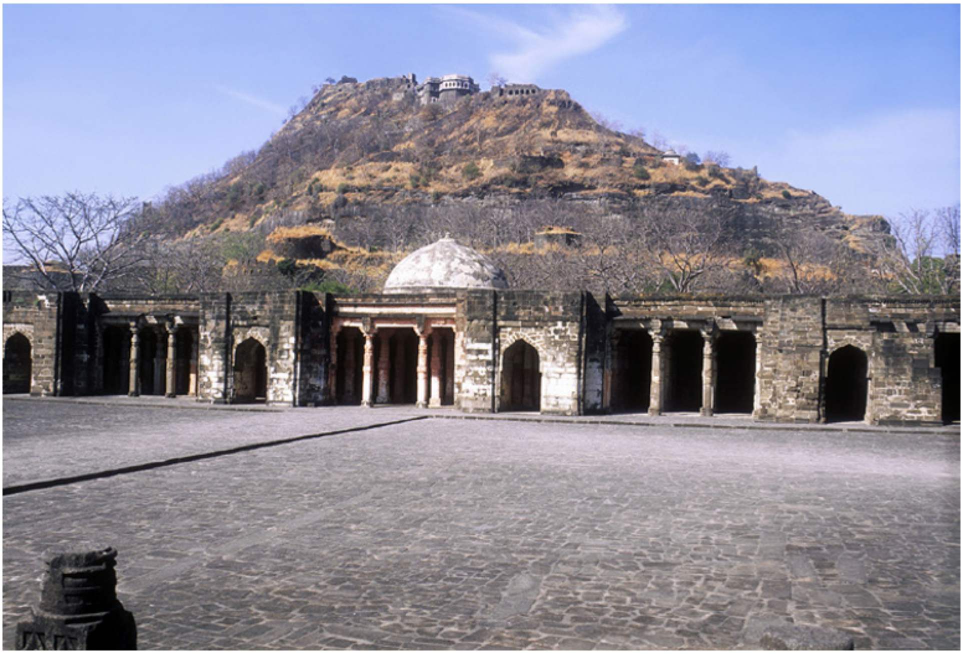

FIGURE 31.1 Daulatabad, Jamiʿ Masjid, *c.* 1313–1318. Source: P.B. Wagoner. Reproduced with permission.

to achieve loftier ceilings, and their articulation of the flat-roofed hypostyle prayer hall through the addition of one or more large domed bays based on an octagon-in-square plan. Most important is their common geopolitical situation: they tend to have been sited along the expanding frontiers of sultanate territory, their location and form communicating the defeat of a local ruler, the assumption of rule over his territory, and the power of the sultanate itself (Wagoner and Rice 2001: 89–105).

A century after most mosques of this type were constructed in the north, the Khalaji sultans ʿAlaʾ al-Din and Qutb al-Din Mubarak (r. 1316–1320) extended Delhi's territory southward and selected the recently conquered city of Devagiri as the site for a new mosque commemorating their victories (Burton-Page 2008: 113–116). The ancient hill fort had been the capital of the erstwhile Yadava kingdom and a major sacred center. The site's political importance made it an ideal location for a new and impressive Khalaji monument, while its many Jain and Hindu temples provided a ready source of building material. More than a simple matter of convenience, the reuse of parts of temples underscored the shift in political power.

Closely following the layout of its north Indian precursors, Daulatabad's Jamiʿ Masjid comprises a square courtyard surrounded by pillared aisles on the north, south and east, and a prayer hall on the west. In its first phase, most likely dating to the city's occupation by ʿAlaʾ al-Din's general Malik Kafur in 1313, the prayer hall was constructed of reused temple columns and ceiling beams, stacked one above the other to create a loftier space, and was topped by flat roofing, interrupted only by a corbelled dome over an octagon-in-square bay in front of the mihrab. In its second phase, under Qutb al-Din Mubarak in 1318, a screen of iwan arches was added as a façade for the prayer hall, as in the earlier mosques at Delhi and Ajmer (see Crane and Korn, CHAPTER 13), but this work is incomplete today, consisting now of only four massive piers, each pierced by an arch. A large domed entrance chamber projecting from the enclosure on the east side, and the tapering, octagonally faceted bastions affixed to the outer corners of the qibla wall are among many other features that connect this mosque to the northern mosques the Delhi sultans had built on their expanding frontiers. Given its many similarities with the foremost example of the type – the Qutbi (Qutb Minar) Mosque in Delhi, at that very moment undergoing an ambitious expansion under ʿAlaʾ al-Din[4] – Daulatabad's Jamiʿ Masjid would inevitably have reminded transplanted settlers from Delhi of that venerable imperial model in the distant capital. In effect, the mosque's conformity to a metropolitan model was as much to invoke the authority of Delhi as it was to announce the annexation of the Deccan.

How are we to imagine the construction of this mosque unfolding, and who would have been responsible for introducing its new and unusual forms into the Deccan? In pragmatic terms, the mosque was clearly the product of a collaborative undertaking, involving on the one hand its two successive patrons and their supervisors of construction, and on the other, the local non-Muslim masons and stoneworkers who would have been recruited to carry out the actual construction under their direction.

The resulting edifice reveals unmistakable traces of this collaboration and its at times tentative and improvised nature. Based on analysis of surviving monuments, recent attempts have been made to reconstruct the chain of command from patron to mason that governed such collaborations and improvisations in the construction of medieval Indian mosques (Flood 2009: 184–189; Wagoner 1999: 249–258). At Daulatabad, we can imagine the north Indian supervisor of the first phase of the work describing to the masons the overall design and ritual needs of the building, based on his mental image of the model in Delhi – from the post and lintel construction with reused temple components, the mihrab recess in the middle of the qibla wall, and the great corbelled dome covering the equivalent of nine bays immediately before it. All of this was fully within the competence of the local masons – even the corbelling technique to construct the dome before the mihrab and the octagon-in-square plan used to fit it within the larger orthogonal plan of the surrounding bays, as these had been common features of temples built in this region under the patronage of the Yadava dynasty.[5] What was evidently a matter of real uncertainty and hesitation for these builders was the new arcuate mode of construction being specified for the decorative niches in the mosque's enclosure wall. While these were duly constructed using rough trapezoidal voussoirs, the craftsmen went on to place massive stone lintels immediately above them to support the upper portions of the wall, thus revealing their doubts about the load-bearing capacity of the arched form. By the second phase, however, they dispensed with this unnecessary expedient above the arches piercing the piers of the unfinished iwan screen, suggesting that they were becoming more confident in the arch's structural properties.

Although Daulatabad's Jamiʿ Masjid is the oldest congregational mosque surviving in the Deccan, it must be emphasized that it was not the first mosque to be constructed at the site. Even before the Delhi Sultanate's conquest of the interior Deccan, Islam had been present along the peninsular coast for many centuries, where in every coastal entrepôt one could find not only resident groups of merchants from the Indian Ocean's western rim but also small communities of local Indian converts to Islam (see Lambourn, CHAPTER 30). Muslims could even be found at key interior cities, as was the case at Devagiri, where the Muslim population was evidently large enough to warrant a congregational mosque even before the Khalaji conquest. This pre-conquest mosque has not yet been identified archaeologically, but an important study by Elizabeth Lambourn has shown that the *khatib* (preacher) of this mosque was maintained by a stipend sent from Yemen by the Rasulid sultan al-Muzaffar Yusuf (r. 1250–1295) – as were *khatib*s at some 40 other sites along India's southwestern coast from Gujarat to the tip of the peninsula (2008). Devagiri was thus part of what Lambourn terms a "*khutba* network," through which the sermon (*khutba*) delivered in the name of the Rasulid sultan on the occasion of Friday noon prayers served not to express Rasulid territorial claims in India but rather to constitute a relationship of "preferred trading partners" between the Rasulids and peninsular communities of Indian Muslims. This distinction may have been lost on Devagiri's Khalaji conquerors, who would have been interested not only in asserting their victory over the Yadavas but also in ending any kind of political relations, however tenuous, between the local Muslim population and the Rasulids across the Arabian Sea.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, after several centuries of independence, the Deccan was absorbed into another north Indian empire, that of the Mughals. During the period of Mughal rule of the Deccan, urban sites and buildings that had been reshaped by the Khalaji and Tughluq sultans were transformed yet again by these new colonizers, and new monuments were constructed. Among the latter is the tomb of Begam Rabiʿa Daurani, wife of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, just north of the city of Aurangabad. Completed in 1660–1661, the monument was constructed after Aurangzeb had for many years served as governor of the Mughals' Deccan territories as a prince. Of all Mughal architecture in the Deccan, this tomb – known today as the Bibi ka Maqbara (Tomb of the Queen) – is the best preserved monument (Figure 31.2).

The formal indebtedness of the Bibi ka Maqbara to other Mughal monuments is one of its most intriguing features. Indeed, one cannot avoid thinking of the Taj Mahal (constructed 1632–1653) when encountering the Deccani tomb; both monuments are centrally planned, topped with bulbous domes, surrounded by

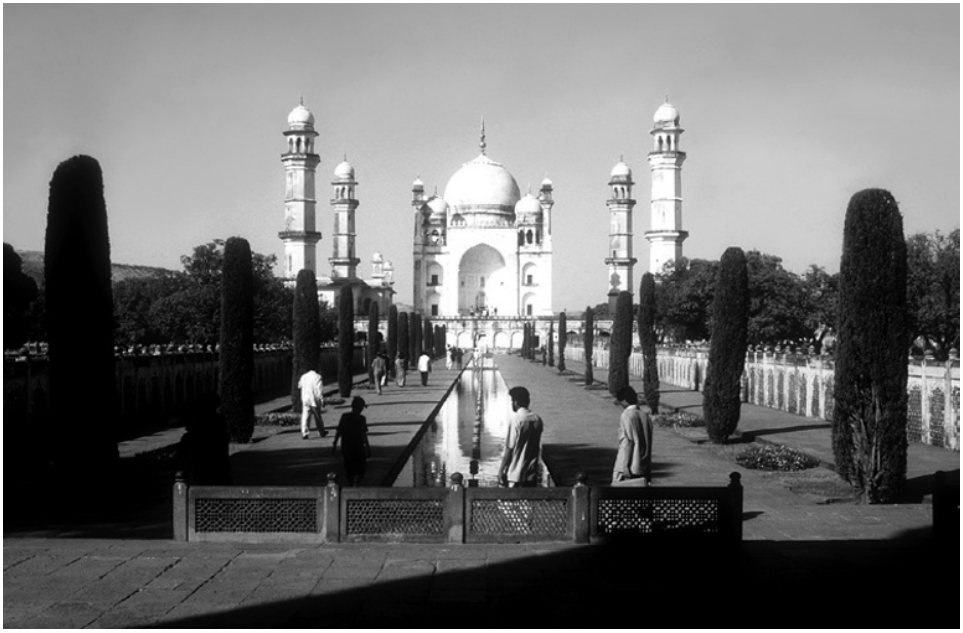

FIGURE 31.2 Aurangabad, Bibi ka Maqbara, 1660–1661. Source: P.B. Wagoner. Reproduced with permission.

four minarets and set within a large garden. In addition, at both tombs the four main sides of the exterior feature a large central iwan framed by a *pishtaq* with two registers of smaller iwans on either side.

At a pragmatic level, the Bibi ka Maqbara's resemblance to the Taj Mahal is a function of it having been designed by ʿAtaʾ Allah, son of Ustad Ahmad, the architect who designed the Taj Mahal (Asher 1992: 263). ʿAtaʾ Allah was clearly familiar with his father's masterpiece and well versed in the forms and conventions of Mughal architecture. Having brought this knowledge with him to the Deccan – if not also design drawings or other models and tools – ʿAtaʾ Allah was able to guide Deccani masons and builders in the construction of a manifestly Mughal monument.

Scholars have often been dismissive of ʿAtaʾ Allah's work, seeing the Bibi ka Maqbara as an inferior copy of the earlier monument, sad evidence of the dissipation of Mughal architectural innovation (Brookes 1987: 160–161). It may be more helpful, however, to consider the resemblance of the Deccani tomb to its precursor as the result of a conscious effort to allude to the Taj Mahal, whether successful or not. In fact, allusions to other monuments are not uncommon in Mughal architecture (and in Islamic architecture in general) and were often used to shape the reception of a given monument and enhance its stature. Such was the power of the Taj Mahal, even mere decades after its construction, that formal allusions to it transformed the Bibi ka Maqbara from an elegant tomb into an architectural pronouncement of the Mughal imperial presence in the Deccan.

There is, however, another dimension to this monument and one that has often been overlooked: the Bibi ka Maqbara makes extensive use of local architectural forms (Parodi 1998). Its minarets, for example, are much taller in proportion to the tomb itself than are those of the Taj Mahal, and this greater vertical thrust is characteristic of much Deccani architecture. Another local element is the painted and carved stucco of its exterior which utilizes the primary local technique of architectural decoration in the region since the fourteenth century to create an effect that resembles the white marble and colored semiprecious stone inlay of the northern tomb (marble is reserved for the interior of the Bibi ka Maqbara). Local valences such as this may have been introduced by the designer or even the patron of the tomb, both of whom were exposed to architecture of the region during their time in the Deccan. Alternatively, these elements may have entered the plan through the local masons and builders who worked on the building.

While local architecture had a significant impact on the design of the Bibi ka Maqbara, there is no question that the building was made in a Mughal mold, as were many others in this period. Remarkably, features and conventions of the Mughal style gradually appeared even in works of art and architecture made for rulers who wished to avoid the yoke of Mughal domination. A striking example of this is provided by changes in royal portraiture in Bijapur between the late sixteenth and the mid-seventeenth century.

Portraits of the Bijapur sultan Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah II (r. 1579–1626) are notable for representing both the physical reality of their subject as well as his inner character, the latter suggested through allusions to poetic ideals. For example, a portrait from about 1590 showing Ibrahim's head and shoulders in a three-quarters view[6] depicts his slightly hooked nose, rosy cheeks, wispy beard, and distinctively wrapped turban, while a Persian poem inscribed in white *nastaʿliq* script on the sash of the turban gives him the epithet Khalil or "friend of God," a common title of his namesake, the prophet Abraham (Ibrahim). The portrait further resonates with poetic descriptions of Ibrahim from the pen of the contemporary Bijapur court poet Muhammad Zuhur ibn Zuhuri, who writes that Ibrahim is "as beautiful as Joseph" and possessed of "cheeks as red as the fire into which Abraham was cast." The painting embodies the unique lyrical style of portraiture associated with the Bijapur court, in which physical appearance and inner significance are perfectly balanced (Hutton 2006: 98; Zebrowski 1983: fig. 49). (See Figure 31.4 for another portrait of this type.)

This kind of portrait began to be replaced, around the third decade of the seventeenth century, with images that are closer to the conventions of Mughal portraiture. A well-known painting of Ibrahim's successor, Muhammad ʿAdil Shah (r. 1627–1656),[7] probably by the Deccani artist ʿAli Riza,[8] follows the model of countless Mughal portraits in depicting the ruler's full body, in an erect and still pose, his face depicted in profile and his torso from a three-quarters perspective. Some elements still seem to evoke local images and ideals: the lush landscape very different from the pale aqua background of most Mughal portraits, and the prominently positioned parrot, a recurring motif in Deccani paintings of this period.[9] There is enough of Mughal portraiture in this image that scholars at first believed it to have been made at the Mughal court or in a collaboration between a Mughal and Deccani artist (Beach *et al.* 2011: vol. 1, 386: Zebrowski 1983: fig. 92). Painted just a few years before Muhammad ʿAdil Shah capitulated to the Mughals, the image represents the Bijapur sultan's authority using a distinctly Mughal visual vocabulary.

Diplomacy

Throughout the periods of colonial control of the Deccan discussed above, as well as when the Deccan was governed independently by the Bahmanis and their successors, diplomatic relations between rulers and their representatives were often animated by the formal exchange of objects, often beautiful and extravagant ones. The roots of such exchanges can be found in the custom of *khilʿat* (robe of honor), practiced across the Islamic world, in which a ruler (or one holding authority from a ruler) presents luxurious garments and other valuable objects to a recipient.

The main diplomatic function of the ritual of *khilʿat* was to establish a relationship between the giver and the receiver and to articulate its nature. Often the relationship was an unequal one, with the ruler demonstrating his authority over the recipient through the gifting of a robe. Instances of *khilʿat* with this kind of subtext are known to have occurred in the Deccan from as early as the fourteenth century, during Delhi's conquests of the region's Indic kingdoms. In one incident, in 1318, the defeated ruler of the Kakatiya kingdom accepted and wore a robe of investiture presented to him by representatives of the Khalaji army from Delhi (Eaton 2005: 11).

Though it does not survive, we can be sure that a robe such as this one would have been made of costly fabrics with elaborate decoration. Ibn Battuta, the Maghribi traveler who visited sultanate India in the 1330s and 1340s, mentions silk robes with matching caps richly embroidered with gold, sometimes studded with precious and semi-precious stones (Gibb 1971: vol. 4, 737). Some of these garments may have been locally made of the renowned cottons of India, but others were surely made with costly imported textiles. Indeed, the fourteenth-century Mamluk writer al-ʿUmari writes that in sultanate India "the linen garments which are imported from Alexandria and the land of the Russians are worn only by those whom the Sultan honors with them" (Kumar and Muscat 1999: 28).

In many cases, a robe was gifted as part of a more equal two-way exchange of objects. For example, in 1603 the Safavid ruler Shah ʿAbbas sent costly gifts (including a crown studded with rubies, 40 horses, 50 pieces of velvet, and 25 carpets) to the sultan of Golconda. These gifts having been found sufficient, the Iranian ambassador was received with honor at court and presented with valuable gifts, which likely included a robe. The 100 officers who accompanied him were also given robes. When it came time for the ambassador to return to Iran, he was sent away with "such of the products of India as were worthy to be sent to the King of Persia" (Briggs 1966: vol. 3, 287). Similar instances of exchange linked the Deccani sultanates to the Mughal court, as when courtiers from the Deccan attended the Mughal emperor Jahangir's *durbar* (court) at Mandu in 1617 bearing copious gifts (Thackston 1999: 227–229) (Figure 31.3). Although textiles were predominant among the objects exchanged in diplomacy, paintings could also be used in this fashion. One surviving image that may have been a gift between rulers is a portrait of Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah II of Bijapur playing a stringed instrument (*tambura*) before admiring courtiers in a garden (Figure 31.4).[10] Ibrahim sits in the bottom right corner of this vivid image, his gold and pink robes spilling around his body, which is depicted in large scale relative to the courtiers at his feet. His delicate hands are positioned as if he is strumming the instrument, mid-song.

This painting, which represents Ibrahim using the combination of physiognomic accuracy and poetic allusion that was the preferred mode of royal portraiture in Bijapur in this period, was probably made in that city around 1605–1609 by the artist Farrukh Husayn (also known as Farrukh Beg). By 1610–1611, however, it had been incorporated into a Mughal album page, perhaps having been part of a diplomatic gift exchange between Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah II and Jahangir.

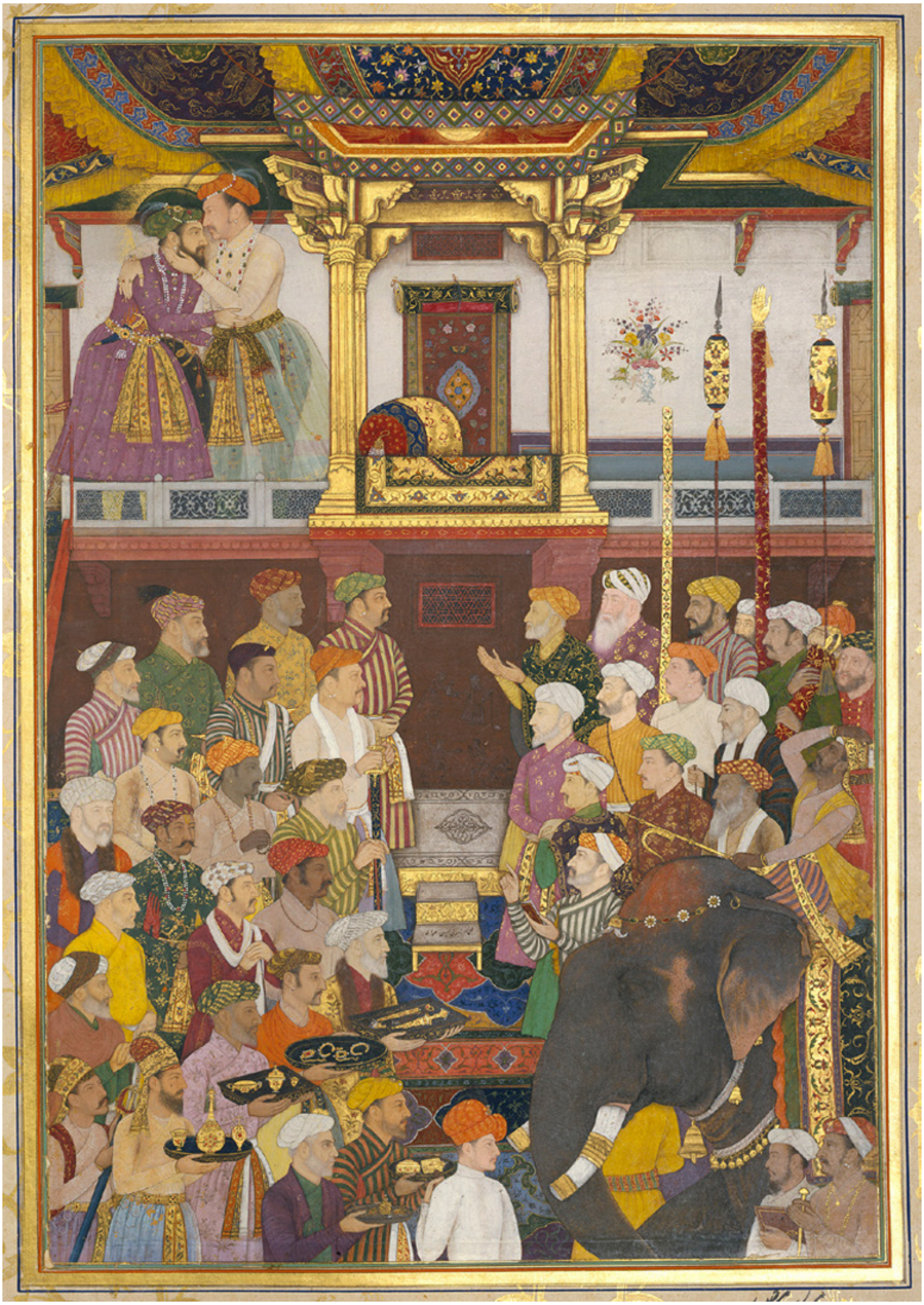

FIGURE 31.3 Jahangir receives Prince Khurram on his return from the Deccan in 1617, painted by Murar, folio 49a from the Windsor Castle *Padshahnama*. Two Deccani courtiers are seen in the lower left corner of the page. Source: Supplied by Royal Collection Trust/© HM Queen Elizabeth II 2012.

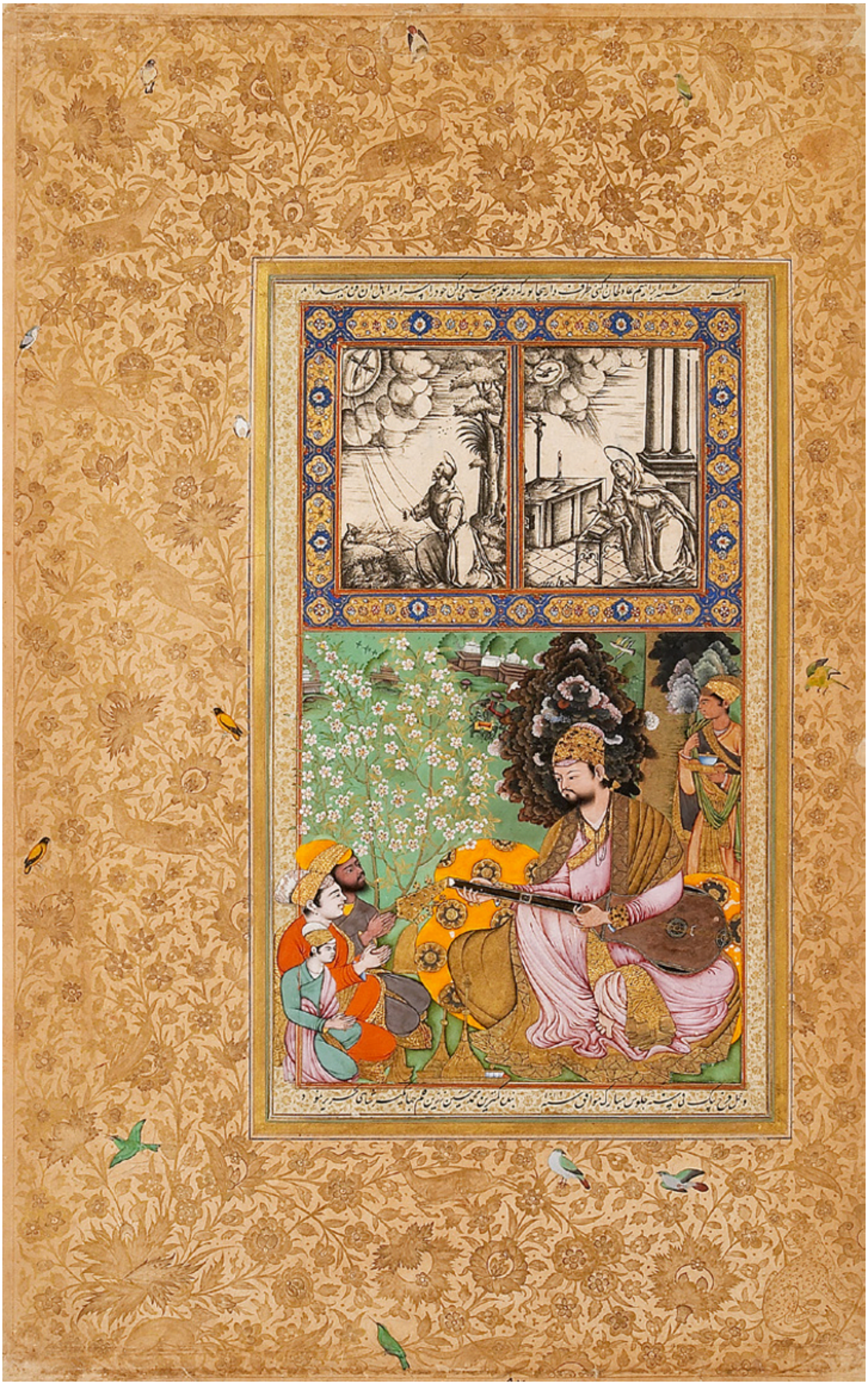

Figure 31.4 Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah II as a musician, painted by Farrukh Beg in Bijapur, *c.* 1605–1609. From the Gulshan Album. Inv. no. A 12 182. Source: National Museum – Náprstek Museum, Prague, Czech Republic. Reproduced with permission.

A descriptive caption added by the Mughal calligrapher Muhammad Husayn during the production of the album offers some evidence of the Mughal perspective on this diplomatic relationship:

> God is Great. Portrait of Ibrahim ʿAdil Khan Deccani, possessor of the territory of Bijapur, who, in the science of the music of the Deccan, considers himself the master of the practitioners of that art. And the work of Farrukh Beg. In the blessed regnal year 5, corresponding to the year 1019 (1610–1611). Written by the lowliest servant Muhammad Husayn "Golden Pen" of Jahangir's court.[11]

Muhammad Husayn's use of the term "khan" rather than "sultan" or "shah" to refer to Ibrahim reflects that in the eyes of the Mughals, the Bijapuri ruler was a political subordinate. Given that Bijapur was still an independent kingdom at this time, however, the portrait's subject would not likely have agreed. Indeed, the painting does not employ any of the features of Mughal portraiture that were adopted by Ibrahim's successors, but rather it presents Ibrahim in the lyrical visual idiom of the ʿAdil Shahi sultanate.

Economic and Social Mechanisms

Trade

During the period considered here, the Deccan was closely connected through trade networks to the wider world of the Indian Ocean – as indeed it had been for more than a millennium by the time it was incorporated into the world of Islam. Through a series of trading ports and entrepôts along the western coast, the great metropolitan centers of the interior plateau were linked economically with the central Islamic lands to the west, including Iraq and southwestern Iran via Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt, accessed through Aden and other markets at the entrance to the Red Sea. From an economic perspective, the most important exports were bulk staples and coarser cotton textiles, while war-horses, bullion, and copper constituted the principal imports. From an art historical perspective, however, the smaller-scale trade in luxury textiles and metalwork may have been of greater moment, as it contributed significantly to the visual and material cultural integration of the Deccan with the wider Islamic world. A consideration of the trade in metalwork is particularly instructive, as it helps illuminate the ways in which Middle Eastern forms and types were introduced to peninsular India, and vice versa.

Indian brass and bronze vessels and accessories had long been highly prized in the broader Indian Ocean world. The work of S.D. Goitein has shown that as early as the twelfth century, the pre-Islamic Deccan had emerged as a major center of the Indian copper industry, and enterprising traders from the Middle East were setting up brass factories along the Deccan's coast. Here they would oversee the production of vessels by local craftsmen, to whom they provided both the raw copper and the designs that were popular in Middle Eastern markets.[12] Most of these vessels were destined for return to the Middle East, since there would have been little local demand for such objects prior to Delhi's conquest of the Deccan and the attendant emergence of an elite class of Islamicized and Persianized consumers. But if similar "outsourcing" arrangements continued on into the period under consideration here, it would help account for the emergence of a growing repertoire of local, Deccani adaptations of international models beginning in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the Bahmani Sultanate was at its height.

This model helps make sense of the existing corpus of brass wares known from the medieval Deccan, among which there are few obvious imports and instead an abundance of items manifesting a distinctive blend of local and imported forms and decorations. For example, a sixteenth-century ewer in a private collection, inscribed with the name Seif Khan, closely echoes the forms of a type of fifteenth-century Persian *aftaba* (ewer) frequently seen in Timurid paintings (for an illustration of the Deccani ewer, see Zebrowski 1997: fig. 186).[13] These consist of a pear-shaped body and neck, with a handle attached to the body and the rim of the neck, and a sinuous spout projecting from the body – all features which are shared by Seif Khan's ewer. But the Deccani ewer is very un-Iranian in its conception and decoration. Instead of featuring engraved or inlayed surface ornament, like its presumed Timurid models, it exhibits an overall more sculptural and plastically conceived form, animated by the swelling diagonal fluting that twists around its base and up to its neck. Tellingly, certain details – like the ribbed cushion molding around the narrow point of its neck – resonate with local Indic architectural forms, in this case, the ribbed *kumbha* (pot or jar) molding employed as a capital in local Indic columns.

By the early 1600s, some of the local Deccani adaptations were proving so successful and compelling that a taste for them appears to have developed even in overseas markets, where they were in turn taken as models by Middle Eastern metalworkers. One striking example is provided by the distinctive "kettle ewers" described by Zebrowski, in which the handle is centrally attached to the two sides of the top of the ewer's body, so that the ewer can be more comfortably carried "hanging from the hand like a basket" (Zebrowski 1997: 153).[14] The "kettle ewer" type can be recognized as an adaptation of the venerable Indic *kamandalu* or spouted ewer, examples of which are known from as early as the opening of the first millennium, and feature similarly formed handles and spouts. While the basic morphology is Indian, the specific shape of the body and treatment of the ornamentation on some of these kettle ewers reveals a Persianizing decorative sensibility. It is little surprise, then, to find such distinctive *aftaba*s becoming part of the Iranian repertoire by the opening of the seventeenth century, as documented by a brass example dated 1602–1603 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Inv. no. 458-1876), and a blue and white ceramic one dated 1616–1617 in the British Museum, possibly from Mashhad (OA 1902.5-21.1).[15]

The impact of trade on the development of the Deccan's metalworking traditions is in many ways best exemplified by a striking Deccani ewer in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Figure 31.5). The body of the ewer takes the form of a goose (*hamsa*), a common motif in traditional Indian iconography, where it is associated both with the waters of life (because of its aquatic nature) and with wisdom and purity (on account of its legendary ability to separate milk from water). The spout takes the form of a *makara*, a non-naturalistically rendered crocodile that is another quintessential Indian image of the waters of life and one of the most commonly used propitious emblems in Indian decorative art. Although the specific iconographic forms and messages are wholly Indian in vocabulary, other features of the ewer resonate more closely with the Islamic tradition of metalwork. Thus, while vessels in the form of animals are quite rare in Indian metalwork before the sultanate period, zoomorphic ewers have a long and venerable history in Islamic metalwork, going all the way back to the eighth century. The Boston *hamsa* ewer beautifully represents the confluence of Persianate and Indic traditions, and the resulting object is one that defies rigid categorization as either "Islamic" or "Hindu." Indeed, it would have served equally well the needs of either a Muslim or a Hindu owner, facilitating the performance of ritual ablutions before religious observances within the home; or again, it may have been proffered by a servant at an elite banquet, enabling Muslim and Hindu guests alike to cleanse their hands before and after the meal.

Diaspora

Beginning as early as the fifteenth century, a class of men known as "Westerners" (*gharbian*) began immigrating to the Deccan from Iran and Central Asia, seeking employment at one of the region's wealthy courts and bringing with them an intimate knowledge of the arts of the Timurid and Turkman realms. This pattern of immigration continued on into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and was a key factor contributing to the strongly Persianate atmosphere characterizing the courts of the Bahmani successor states.

Some of these figures would play an important role in local politics, as with Sultan Quli, the immigrant from Hamadan who after a governorship under the Bahmanis went on to establish the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda. Sultan Quli (b. *c.* 1470) was a descendent of Jahanshah (r. 1438–1467), the powerful ruler of a confederation of tribal Turkmen rulers known as the Qaraqoyunlu, and it was this princely ancestry that forced him to flee Iran when a different group, the Aqqoyunlu Turkmen dynasty, became dominant (Minorsky 1955: 70). The impact of individuals such as Sultan Quli on the visual landscape of the region was immense. Once established in positions at the Deccani courts, these warriors, thinkers, and artists triggered many new developments in the Deccani visual landscape.

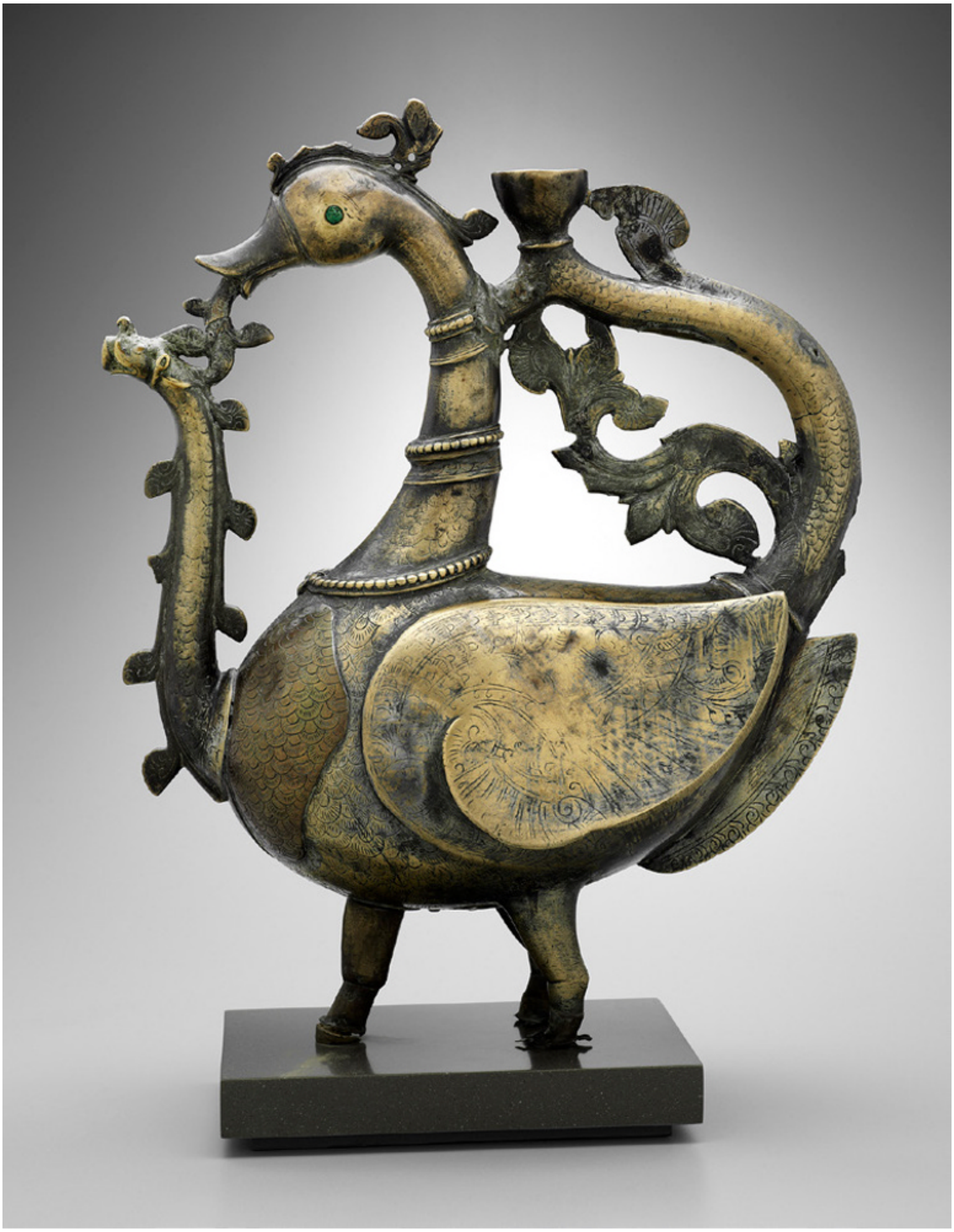

Figure 31.5 Ewer in the shape of a goose (*hamsa*), Deccan, fifteenth or sixteenth century. Bronze with layer brass repairs, copper-arsenic paste. Helen and Alice Colburn Fund, 1937, 37.470. Source: Photograph © 2012 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with permission.

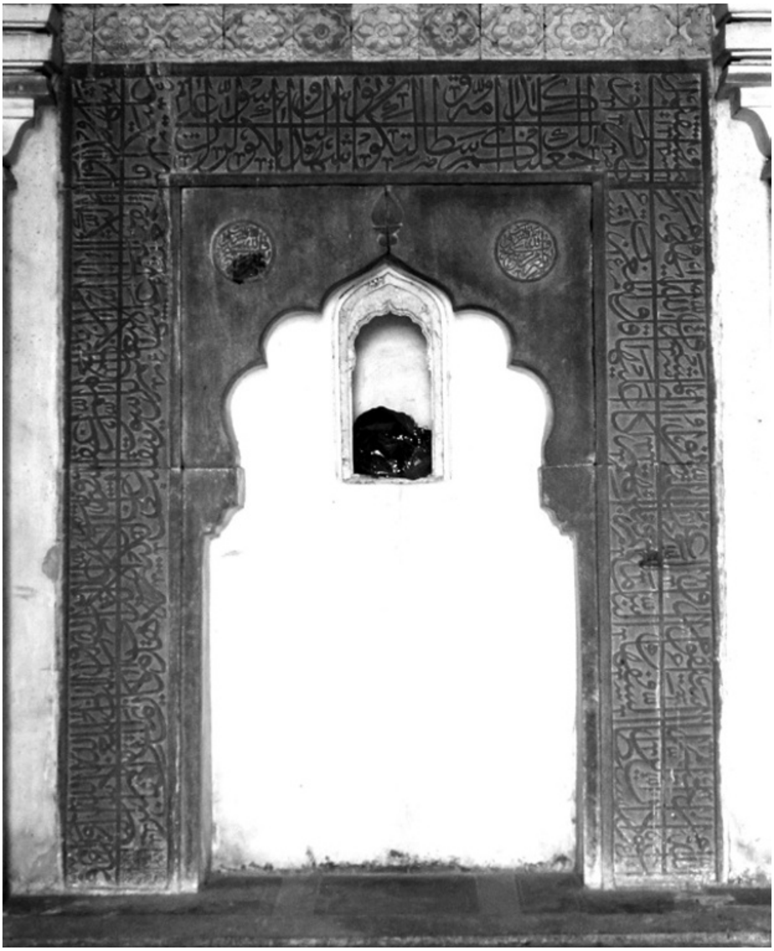

FIGURE 31.6 Golconda, mosque attached to the tomb of Hayat Bakhsh Begum, carved stone inscription with text from the Qurʾan (*sura* 2, verses 142 and 143) framing the mihrab. Written by Taqi al-Din Muhammad, son of Shaykh Salih of Bahrain, 1667. Source: Courtesy of Marika Sardar. Reproduced with permission.

Among the most enduring types of evidence of this phenomenon are monumental Arabic inscriptions on the walls of tombs, mosques, and other monuments across the Deccan. A mosque in the royal funerary complex of the Qutb Shahi sultans of Golconda contains one such inscription (Figure 31.6). The building adjoins the tomb of Hayat Bakhsh Begum, wife of the sultan Muhammad Qutb Shah (r. 1612–1626). Surrounding the mihrab of the mosque is an inscribed rectangular frame containing a prayer and passages from the Qurʾan (*sura* 2, verses 142 and 143). At its end, the inscribed text reads, "written by Taqi al-Din Muhammad, son of Shaykh Salih of Bahrain, in 1077 (1667)" (Begley 1985: no. 64).

Whether Taqi al-Din himself or his father Shaykh Salih first left Bahrain for south India, the calligrapher's roots were in the islands of Bahrain, which were part of the Safavid Empire in the seventeenth century. Taqi al-Din's calligraphic expertise, as evidenced by this and other inscriptions he created, was in compositions of monumental overlapping *thuluth* script. As is common with this script, the inscription in the mosque of Hayat Bakhsh Begum is divided into two registers by elongated letters. Its dense and complex composition demonstrates Taqi al-Din's mastery of a script that was in high demand throughout India in this period.

As in other architectural inscriptions produced in the Deccani sultanates, it is the space *around* the Arabic letters that is carved out, leaving the text raised. This was the technique favored by artists working in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, a preference that may reflect the importance of the written word in Islamicate societies. On a page from a Qurʾan or other Arabic manuscript, the dark letters generally stand out starkly against light-colored paper. A similar effect could be created in an architectural inscription with raised letters, especially when executed on a smoothly polished black stone, as in Taqi al-Din's inscription, so that the black letters stand out against the lighter surface of the stone that has been cut away.

In contrast to the prominence of the written word in Islamicate societies, Indic societies of the Deccan emphasized oral rather than written learning (Salomon 1998: 7–8). Pre-sultanate Deccani inscriptions in Indic languages reflect this preference: letters tended to be first written in a temporary medium such as ink or chalk and then incised into the chosen surface. It is not until the later medieval period that Indic-language inscriptions were occasionally executed with raised letters, apparently in imitation of the standard practice of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu calligraphers.

One émigré artist had a particularly significant impact on the course of Deccani painting: the abovementioned painter known as Farrukh Beg or Farrukh Husayn (Beach *et al.* 2011: vol. 1, 187–210). Although his biography has not been fully reconstructed, a few points can be made with some degree of certainty: his career began in Safavid Iran (probably Khurasan) in the mid-sixteenth century, after which followed periods of employment under the Mughal prince Mirza Muhammad Hakim (in Kabul), the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), the Bijapur sultan Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah II, and finally under the Mughals again in the atelier of the emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627).

Farrukh Beg's initial artistic training was acquired in Iran, and as he moved from court to court, the style of his paintings retained many features associated with sixteenth-century Persianate painting. Indeed, it was his facility with Persianate patterning, figural types, and architectural depictions, among other things, that made him attractive to patrons at the Islamicate courts of India. This type of imagery had been a critical ingredient in the formation of imperial Mughal painting and Farrukh Beg's exquisitely delicate Persianate imagery earned him esteem at the court of Akbar. In the 1580s and 1590s, however, this imagery was beginning to go out of style as Mughal artists began to work in a more naturalistic idiom. Farrukh Beg seems to have adapted to this change, subtly modifying his style to include a few uniquely Mughal features.

In the last decade of the sixteenth century, Farrukh Beg left Mughal service in order to work at the court of Ibrahim ʻAdil Shah II, remaining there until 1609. Known in Bijapur as Farrukh Husayn, the artist was the recipient of royal favor and was selected to produce a number of royal portraits, such as the aforementioned painting of Ibrahim playing a *tambura* (Figure 31.4). Just why Farrukh Beg left Akbar's court for Bijapur has been a topic of extensive scholarly debate, but it is possible that he was drawn south simply by rumors of Ibrahim's generosity as a patron. If he was motivated by anything other than a desire for remuneration, it was perhaps the allure of working in a smaller atelier, where he might have greater artistic freedom and more influence over other artists.

Indeed, while Farrukh Beg absorbed some elements of the local pictorial idiom during his tenure in Bijapur, he retained many of the Safavid and Mughal features that dominated his earlier work, and these had a profound impact on the work of other local artists. Some of these features – the depiction of small buildings along the horizon to indicate spatial recession, for example – became nearly ubiquitous in Bijapuri painting, even after his departure from the Deccan.

Farrukh Beg's role in the transmission of Safavid and Mughal painting styles to Bijapur was not a passive one. Indeed, as John Seyller has argued, the artist was strategic in his use of elements from the different pictorial styles in which he was trained, "deliberately accentuating that which was most exotic in each of his respective ateliers" (1995: 340). Although this manner of making himself stand out from other artists may have been designed to enhance his own reputation, it also had another effect: to introduce entirely new elements into the visual world of the Deccan.

Although émigré artists contributed greatly to the expansion of the Deccani stylistic repertoire, they did not accomplish this single-handedly. Just as important was the patronage accorded to them by other immigrants, whose tastes naturally predisposed them to favor familiar styles of objects and buildings from their homelands. One of the most prominent members of this Iranian diaspora was Mahmud Gawan, who first came from Gilan in northern Iran to the Deccan's shores in 1453 to carry out trade but quickly found favor at the Bahmani court and was raised to the post of chief minister in 1458. This talented Iranian had traveled widely throughout the heartland of the Islamic world and was as noted for his scholarly accomplishments as he was for his political acumen. Keen on promoting Islamic and Persianate learning, Gawan established a madrasa in the heart of Bidar in 1472, evidently bringing builders from Timurid Khurasan and Central Asia to construct it, and clearly bringing a personal acquaintance with some of the institutions of higher learning there, such as the Ulugh Beg madrasa in Samarqand. Mahmud Gawan's madrasa (Figure 31.7) is designed in the classic four-iwan form, with vaulted lecture halls opening onto the interior courtyard on

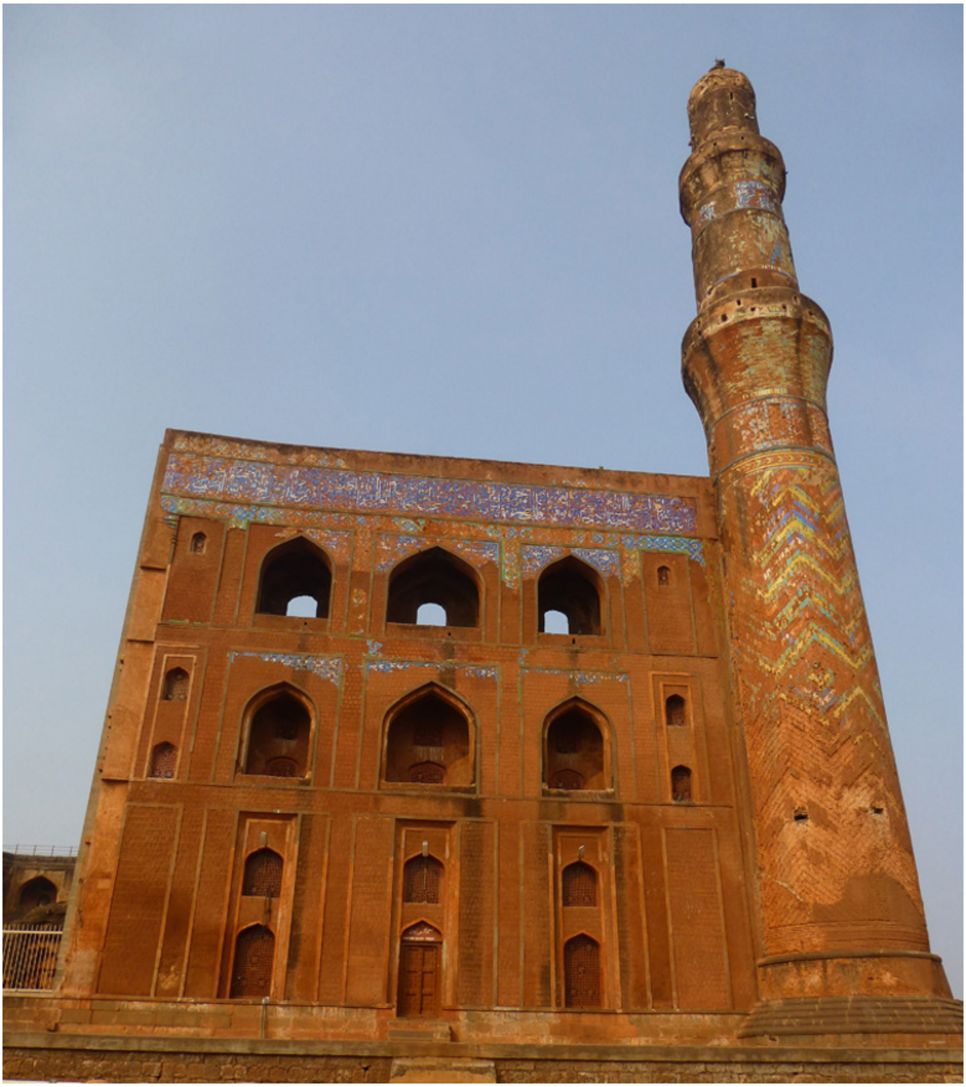

FIGURE 31.7 Madrasa established by Mahmud Gawan at Bidar, 1472. Source: Gülru Necipoğlu. Reproduced with permission.

three sides, a vaulted entrance on the fourth side, and rooms for the teachers and students arranged in three stories in between. The exterior walls of the building and its one surviving minaret were originally covered with chevron and calligraphic designs executed in polychrome tilework, some of which still survives today. The result is the most Timurid-looking work of architecture to have survived anywhere in India (Eaton 2005: 59–77; Yazdani 1947: 91–100).

Conclusion

As the Deccan became a part of the larger Islamic world, older Indic forms and categories of objects gave way to newer cosmopolitan ones, enabling their users to participate in a wider cultural universe that extended far beyond the peninsula. Although traditional Indic forms persisted in certain contexts, and thus helped to affirm the locally rooted nature of Islamic culture in the Deccan, the striking fact remains that by the fifteenth century, a Deccani city like Bidar would have had much more in common with contemporary cities in northern India or in Khurasan than with older cities in its own region, or with the predominantly Hindu villages and towns of its hinterland. Some of what was new was directly related to Islamic religious practice – as was the case with mosques, madrasas, and Qurʾanic calligraphy. But much more of this new visual world would have had only marginal religious relevance, such as the sumptuous palaces and gardens, the richly illuminated manuscripts, and the rare diplomatic gifts that revealed the values of elite Persianate courtly life.

Indeed, the Deccan's new Persianate courtly culture had a profound impact even on the Indic court of Vijayanagara, which ruled over the southernmost portions of the Deccan between the mid-fourteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries. Although Vijayanagara's rulers were Hindus, like the majority of their subjects, they enthusiastically appropriated many elements of Persianate material culture both from their northern neighbors and from the regions across the Indian Ocean with which they enjoyed trade and diplomatic relations Thus, by the fifteenth century, Vijayanagara's rulers styled themselves "Sultans among Hindu Kings" and wore Persianate-styled court dress (Figure 31.8), consisting of a stitched tunic known in the local vernacular as *kabayi*, derived from the Arab *qabaʾ*, and a high, conical cap of brocaded fabric known as a *kuḷḷayi*, derived from the Turko-Persian *kulah* (Wagoner 1996). At the same time, a Persianate-inspired style of architecture was adopted at Vijayanagara, resonating closely with the forms of contemporary Bahmani architecture, and similarly based on a structural and formal vocabulary of mortared rubble masonry, piers, arches and vaults, and carved stucco ornament. As George Michell (1992) has demonstrated, this style was employed primarily for courtly, secular buildings – pavilions, guard towers, gateways, baths and water tanks, stables, and the like – while Hindu temples and other religious structures continued to be built in the traditional Indic style.

As the case of Vijayanagara demonstrates, no courtly society of the medieval Deccan could escape being profoundly changed by the networks that linked the region with Delhi, Iran, Central Asia, Arabia, and the Gulf. These changes were wrought through a wide range of mechanisms, ranging from the control of a colonizing power over the work of local masons to the cooperation of traders in the ports of Aden with brass workers in Mangalore. At the beginning of the period considered here, the Deccan may indeed have been a somewhat secondary and peripheral region, as viewed from the perspective of South Asia's traditional north Indian core in the Indo-Gangetic heartland. But by the close of the

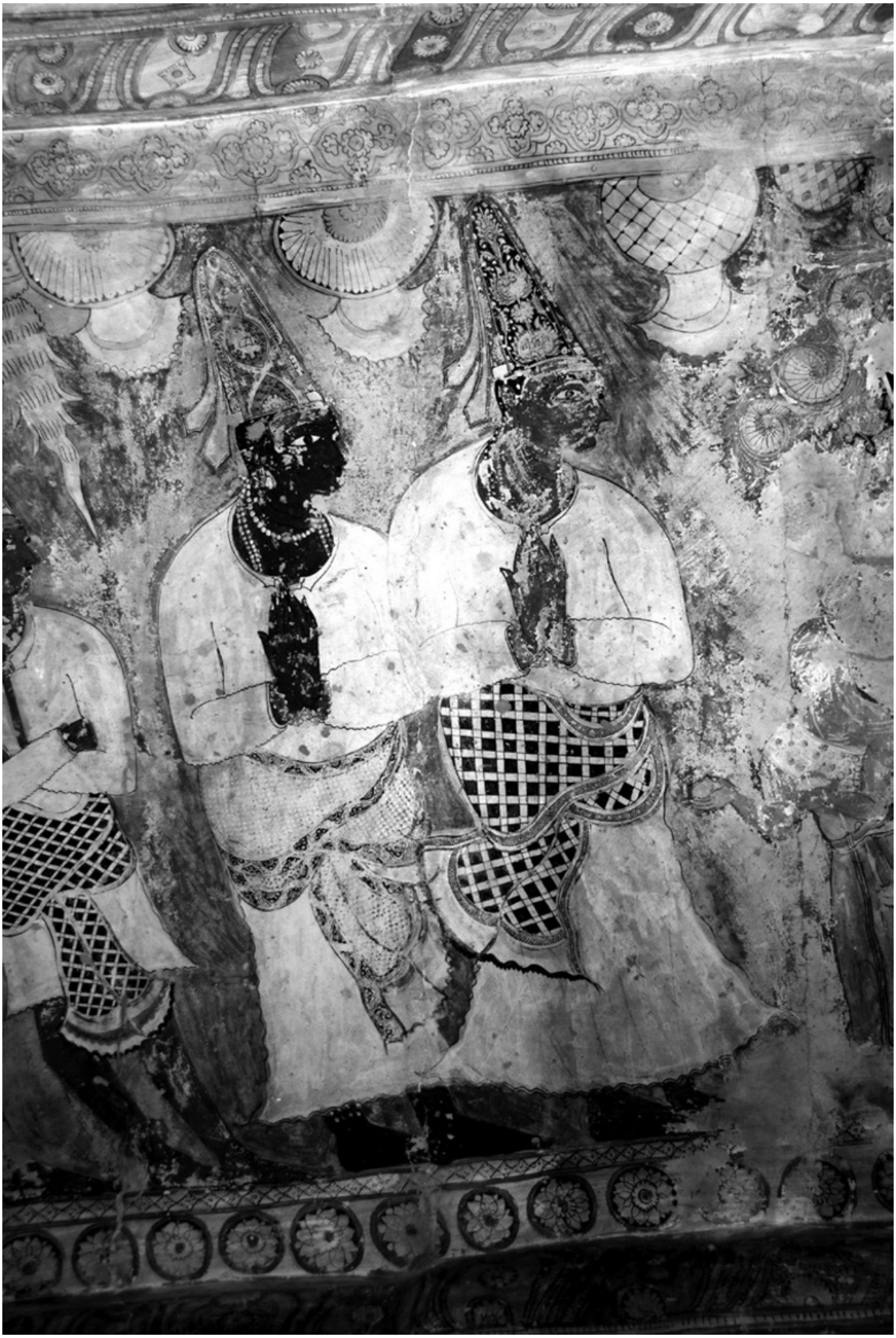

FIGURE 31.8 Portraits of the patrons Viranna and Virupana, ceiling painting from the temple of Virabhadra at Lepakshi, mid-sixteenth century. Source: Brigitte Majlis. Reproduced with permission.

mid-seventeenth century, the Deccan had been firmly incorporated within the broader Islamic world of the Indian Ocean, elevating the region to a position of greater centrality, and investing its art with a strikingly cosmopolitan character. It is the great diversity of the Deccan's intersecting cultural strands that have made the region's heritage so richly engaging.

Notes

1 A major exhibition focusing on art of the Deccan was held in 2015 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. For the accompanying catalogue, see Haidar and Sardar 2015. Another substantial Deccan exhibition took place at the National Museum, Delhi, in 2015. See Ramaswami and Singh 2015.

2 For a diagram of a city planned in this way see the map of Tughluqbad in Shokoohy and Shokoohy 2007: fig. 5.1.

3 Historical sources disagree as to the precise date and patron of the mosque. It is likely that it was begun between 1313 and 1315 under Malik Kafur, a general of ʿAlaʾ al-Din Khalaji, and then expanded or rebuilt entirely by Qutb al-Din Mubarak in 1318 (Eaton and Wagoner 2014: CHAPTER 2).

4 This mosque is better known today as the Quwwat al-Islam Mosque, but as Sunil Kumar 2002 has demonstrated, this name dates only to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

5 The pillared halls (*mandapa*) of Yadava temples often include a single octagon-in-square bay supporting a corbelled dome. Examples include the Bhavani Temple at Tahakari (early twelfth century), Mahadeva Temple at Jhodge (mid-twelfth century), the Jogeshvara Temple at Devlane (late twelfth–early thirteenth century), and the Jagadambadeva Temple at Kokamthan (thirteenth century?), all within the immediate region of Daulatabad. See Cousens 1931 and Kanitkar 2006–2007. In all likelihood, some of the temples in Devagiri itself had *mandapa*s of this type.

6 David Collection, Copenhagen, Inv. no. 105/2007.

7 Private collection, United States. Illustrated in Beach *et al.* 2011: vol. 1, 388, fig. 13.

8 Work by this artist has been known for some time, but the identity of the artist has been unclear. In the early 1980s Mark Zebrowski identified him as "The Bodleian Painter" because of a particularly well-known painting in the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library (Zebrowski 1983: 78 and fig. 54). Keelan Overton has recently argued that "The Bodleian Painter" was in fact an individual named ʿAli Riza who was active in Bijapur in the first decade of the seventeenth century (Overton 2011: CHAPTER 5; Beach *et al.* 2011: vol. 1, 375–390).

9 An oversized white parrot appears in the most well-known of ʿAli Riza's paintings, "Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah visiting a *mazjub*" (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Douce Or.b.2, f. 1r), painted in Bijapur between 1610 and 1627. A similarly enlarged bird dominates a painting depicting a red parrot in a tree with a ram tethered beneath it (Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, 76.438), possibly from Golconda *c.* 1660. The parrots in these two images appear to be adaptations of imagery in prints by the Flemish artist Adrian Collaert (1560–1618) (Beach *et al.* 2011: vol. 1, 385, 389 n. 38). For images of these two paintings see Zebrowski 1983: pl. VII; Mittal 2007: cover and no. 30.

10 Náprstek Museum, Prague inv. no. A 12 182.

11 It is not completely clear whether the year referred to (1019 AH) was the date of the production of the painting or the writing of the inscription. For the purposes of this article it is assumed that 1610–1611 is the year that the inscription was written. Thanks to Yael Rice for assistance with this translation.

12 This pattern is suggested by a number of twelfth-century business documents fortuitously preserved in the Cairo Geniza. From these letters, we learn that Abraham ben Yiju, a Jew originally from al-Mahdiyya in Tunisia, was engaged in the India trade from Aden and eventually settled in Mangalore where he established and ran a brass factory between 1132 and 1149. Abraham's business associates in Aden would send him their clients' old and broken vessels, which his Indian craftsmen would melt down and recast as new vessels according to the detailed written orders provided by his associates. See Goitein and Friedman 2008: 58–59; 558–559.

13 The Timurid type is in turn a metalwork adaptation of an imported Chinese porcelain ewer type, common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Some Timurid paintings include representations of what appear to be the actual imported Chinese porcelain model, complete with the reinforcing sprue running from the slender spout to the neck.

14 For a Deccani example of the kettle ewer type (in the National Museum of Denmark, Department of Ethnography, inv. no. EB 2594), see Zebrowski 1997: fig. 202.

15 For the Victoria and Albert Museum kettle ewer, see Zebrowski 1997: fig. 201. As for the British Museum's ceramic version, Sheila Canby (1999: 115 and fig. 105) suggests the possible scenario that it might have been inspired by an Indian metal ewer that had been presented to the shrine at Mashhad.

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Part VI

Early Modern Empires and their Neighbors (1450–1700)

The beginning of the early modern era was marked by the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the fall of Nasrid Granada in 1492, transformative events accompanied by the rise and colonial expansion of Europe that would inaugurate more extensive transcultural exchanges. The late medieval period, covered in the previous section, preceded an important turning point in the history of Islamic art and architecture: the emergence of three great early modern empires in chronological succession, the Ottomans in the Mediterranean (1299–1923), the Safavids in Iran (1501–1736), and the Mughals in India (1526–1857), whose legacy laid the groundwork for the later emergence of modern nation states. These empires coexisted and interacted with their neighbors and with prominent courts which cultivated their own artistic self-definition, including the Circassian Mamluks in Cairo (1382–1517), the Timurids in Herat (*c.* 1370–1507), the Qaraqoyunlu (1375–1468) and Aqqoyunlu (1378–1501) Turkmens in Tabriz, the Shaybanid Uzbeks in Bukhara (1505–1598), the Lodi Sultanate in Delhi (1451–1526), the Deccan Sultanates (1527–1686), the Saʿdian dynasty in Marrakesh (1554–1659) with its African extensions that was succeeded by the ʿAlawi dynasty in Meknes (1667 to the present), and various maritime polities in West Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia.

Each of the three superpowers promoted a Persianate visual culture rooted in Ilkhanid and Timurid-Turkmen precedents. Yet by creatively assimilating their shared “international” heritage with local elements, they transformed it into recognizable autonomous geopolitical expressions of empire. Their urban development projects and architectural patronage were monumental in scale and ambition. The court workshops housed in successive imperial capitals (Edirne and Istanbul;

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Tabriz, Qazvin, and Isfahan; Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore, and Delhi) raised the production of manuscripts and luxury objects to a new level of excellence. These ateliers were staffed with named artists and calligraphers, whose celebrity became publicized by signatures and unprecedented genres of written sources in Persian and Turkish. Elaborating upon late Timurid models, such as album prefaces and biographies of artists and calligraphers, those texts began to reflect an early modern art historical self-consciousness about authorship, creative genius, stylistic distinctiveness, and aesthetic evaluations.

Ottoman biographical texts in Turkish included the lives of such famous sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century chief court architects as Sinan and Mehmed Agha. While no biographies of architects were produced in the Safavid court, the son and grandsons of the Mughal architect of the Taj Mahal (1632–1653) in Agra, Ustad Ahmad Lahori, wrote and translated treatises on architecture as well as geometry. Lisa Golombek and Ebba Koch's chapter on the Timurid roots of Mughal architecture discusses the shared emphasis on geometric planning principles in these interconnected building traditions. Since the Mughals named themselves after their ancestors as the Timurids of India, continuities in design concepts and building types, such as monumental mausoleums with double-shell domes set in formal gardens, are not surprising. Yet the distinctive merging of such imported concepts with local masonry traditions and materials in the white marble Taj Mahal hardly makes it a Timurid monument. Nor do its proportions, its semi-naturalistic floral inlays in the Italianate *pietra dura* technique, and the axially planned layout of its perfectly bilateral garden complex find any parallel in the brick-and-tilework mausoleum complex built in Samarqand for the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's ancestor Timur, called the Gur-i Mir (1403–1404).

Although the brick-and-tile based architecture of the Safavids in Iran descended from the Timurid-Turkmen architectural tradition of that region, it too departs in significantly innovative ways from that tradition, unlike the self-consciously imitative architectural practices in Bukhara of the Uzbek Shaybanids, who deliberately portrayed themselves as the new Timurids of Central Asia. Ottoman architecture, which in its formative period analyzed in the previous section had incorporated Timurid and Mamluk features, increasingly engaged with the Byzantine and Italian architectural traditions of the eastern Mediterranean in the new imperial capital Istanbul. The original architectural synthesis initiated in mid-fifteenth century was further refined under the tenure of the chief architect Sinan between 1539 and 1588. The chapter of Sussan Babaie and Çiğdem Kafescioğlu takes a comparative approach to the architectural cultures of the three early modern empires, focusing primarily on the urban development of their latest imperial capitals: Istanbul, Isfahan, and Delhi. The self-reflexivity and inter-urban dynamics of these early modern cities that developed in response to one another will find a parallel in the modern architectural developments of two Ottoman cities, Istanbul and Cairo, that are paired together in the next section.

Christiane Gruber and Emine Fetvacı, on the other hand, compare Persianate manuscript paintings produced under royal and urban patronage in major cities of the early modern empires.

Consumption history has recently turned into a subject of its own in studies of material culture during the same period. These studies have taken their lead from economic historians, who demonstrated long ago a global economic growth that peaked in the sixteenth century, subsequently triggering a proliferation of more diverse consumption goods and fashions around the world. Not limited to courtly circles, such studies address the growing accessibility of conspicuous consumption goods to lower end middling classes, a phenomenon not unlike the amplified circulation of objects and the emergence of patronage by a medieval urban bourgeoisie prior to the Mongol invasions, which was analyzed in the last section of the first volume. It is nevertheless commonly acknowledged that the rise of the new consumer culture starts with luxury trade and court cultures, resulting in dynamic interactions between "top-down" and "bottom-up" mechanisms. No longer conceptualized in terms of "influence" or "one-way receptiveness," cross-cultural transactions are increasingly being framed as cultural intersections triggered by a fluid two-way traffic and translation of multiple artistic traditions. Another facet of continuity with late medieval Islamic court cultures was the ever-growing fascination with naturalistic Europeanate figurative arts, already attested in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries by sporadic examples mentioned in the chapters of Cynthia Robinson, David Roxburgh, and Tülay Artan. These include Frankish-style painted murals in the Alhambra Palace and Persianate album paintings that begin to complement the taste for chinoiserie, as well as the Ottoman enthusiasm for collecting Arras tapestries and Burgundian rock crystal objects, Italianate bronze portrait medals, oil paintings and engravings. Eventually this trend would reverse the medieval East-to-West flow of collected luxury objects and technologies of the arts and architecture, setting the scene for later centuries covered in the following sections.

Compounded by the dynamism of intercontinental trade relations and diplomacy, the exponential increase in preserved written archival records, inventories, and ambassadorial reports allows more detailed analyses on the trajectories of portable objects and techniques. Tülay Artan's article on objects of consumption assesses the historiography of this subject, with a focus on the Mediterranean interconnections of the Ottomans and Mamluks. Massumeh Farhad analyzes diplomatic gift exchange and commercial trade relations between the Ottomans and their Safavid neighbors, including lower end goods. Her study on Safavid portable arts is complemented by Marianna Shreve Simpson's account of the Safavid arts of diplomacy with Europe in the age of the Renaissance and Reformation. Another related chapter by Walter B. Denny provides a broad overview of new developments in such media as carpets, textiles, tiles, and trade in the early modern Islamic world.

This section ends with two chapters that consider the impact of greater mobility on the architectural monuments of previously underexplored regions. Imran bin Tajudeen presents a wide-lens interpretative review of trade, politics, and Sufi syntheses in the formation of Southeast Asian Islamic architecture. His chapter focuses on the Nusantara region known as Bilad al-Jawah in Arab and Persian sources, a region housing the world's largest Muslim community today that was collectively called Jawi in Malay. The region's Muslim maritime empires (centered around port cities like Melaka, Demak, Aceh, Banten, Brunei, Banjarmasin, and Makassar) developed shared aesthetic and linguistic cultures, shaped by multiethnic actors that contributed between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries to its Islamization and to the formation of a Javanese-Indic synthesis in architecture. The monuments he analyzes resonate with South Asian, East Asian, and West African counterparts discussed in other chapters, hinting at probable maritime connections mediated by the popular appeal of orthodox Sufi orders (*tariqa*s) and the charismatic role of Muslim proselytizers, also based in Indian and southern Chinese ports. The use in several fifteenth-century Southeast Asian mosques of Vietnamese blue-and-white tiles produced for the Javanese market, and subsequently of Chinese and Delft ceramic plates set into niches, finds a parallel in the mihrabs of mosques in Oman along the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula and along the coast of East Africa. Javanese mosques with four central columns also raise the possibility of multidirectional cultural flows between early modern South Asia and Southeast Asia, just as Islamic mausoleums emerge as a new building type in both of these regions.

The last chapter by Thomas B.F. Cummins and María Judith Feliciano opens a new window onto the subject of "Mudejar Americano." It examines the modalities and transformed meanings of Iberian aesthetic transmissions of geometric forms and craft knowledge in the New World, notably their application to woodwork *artesonado* ceilings in the Americas. The chapter leaves other media such as ceramic tiles (*azulejo*s) and textiles to future researchers. While it may well be incorrect to refer to "Islamic" forms in "New Spain" from the perspective of the early modern emic approach adopted by the authors, who propose a radical de-Islamicization of naturalized Iberian formal elements, it is not so from an etic point of view, interested in ultimate origins and chains of transmission. Besides the projection of such labels as "*mezquita*" (mosque) and "*morisco*" (converted Muslim) onto what Spaniards encountered in the New World, the protocols of conquest and colonization they used in the Americas were recognized by contemporaries as being derived from an inversion of Islamic law (as in medieval Seville and Norman Sicily, where rules previously applied to protected non-Muslim communities were readily adopted by Christian rulers). Indeed, as the authors note, the imperial Habsburg anxiety about Ottoman expansion "had tremendous echo and artistic expressions throughout the viceroyalties." The ongoing struggle between Christianity and Islam, Spain and "the Turk," found visual expression in painting and sculpture, thereby laying a fertile ground for later Orientalist images in the modern era. Whether lingering associations with the arts of Islam entirely disappeared or not in the new American environments, the opening of a window with transcontinental horizons across the Atlantic Ocean in this chapter is significant in itself. Such an innovative perspective promises to complement the by now commonplace connective paradigms of Mediterranean and Indian Ocean studies, which have enabled fruitful analyses of regional diversity and global resonance within and beyond those "liquid continents."

32

The Mughals, Uzbeks, and the Timurid Legacy

Lisa Golombek and Ebba Koch

The Mughals came to India as Timurids. Founded by the Turko-Mongol warlord Timur (Tamerlane) (*c.* 1370–1405), the Timurid dynasty ruled much of Iran and Central Asia for over a century (*c.* 1370–1507), first from Samarqand (Uzbekistan) and then from Herat (Afghanistan). Toward the end of the fifteenth century its realms were already diminishing. In 1507 Babur, the proud descendant of Timur and Chinggis Khan, after having been driven from Samarqand by the Uzbeks to his exile in Kabul, sought new opportunities in India. In 1526 he vanquished the last Lodi sultan, literally, with the *Zafarnama* (Book of Victory, Timur's official history) in his hands (Babur 1996: 274–277; Balabanlılar 2012: 45–47; Zayn Khan 1982: 77–81). In this work the historian Sharaf al-Din ʿAli Yazdi had described Babur's ancestor Timur's conquest of Delhi of 1398. Shah Jahan, Babur's descendant in the fifth generation, still had the *Zafarnama* read aloud to him at night (Inayat Khan 1990: 573).

"Timuridity" always remained essential to Mughal self-understanding, and while the Ottomans and Safavids also attempted to partake in the Timurid myth (Balbanlılar 2012: 39–40), only the Mughals could claim a direct genealogical descent. In eighteenth-century Europe the Mughal dynasty was still known as the descendants of "Tamerlane," and portraits of the Great Mughals reaching back to their famous ancestor were valued collection items (Scheuleer 1996). Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, was, of course, the most familiar with Timurid culture, having experienced it firsthand in both Central Asia and Herat. Nevertheless, his descendants, particularly Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) and Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658) took renewed interest in affirming the relationship, as it lent prestige and credibility to their own reigns. Testimonies to the Mughals' awareness

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and conscious reference to their Timurid heritage abound in Mughal art. They celebrated this lineage in painted genealogies, dynastic group portraits, and calligraphic inscriptions on art objects and precious stones. The ingenious Jahangir went so far as to cover the Indian landscape with genealogical inscriptions which he had put on trees, rocks, and architectural frames of ancient springs (Koch 2007). The Mughals collected Timurid artworks and (illustrated) manuscripts. The famous Persian painter Bihzad (*c.* 1450–1535), head of the royal ateliers in late Timurid Herat and early Safavid Tabriz, was a proverbial model of excellence for Mughal painters.[1] The most visible and enduring expression of the Mughal–Timurid connection was, however, architecture. From the beginning the Mughals cultivated their patronage of building as a statement of their presence in India.

While the examples of art objects cited above are clear evidence for the Mughals' wish to sustain and assert their Timurid heritage, the case of architecture is more elusive. The alleged "Timuridity" of the Taj Mahal, the mausoleum built by Shah Jahan for his wife Mumtaz Mahal (1631–1643), has long been a subject of debate (Chaghatai 1938; Hoag 1968; Golombek 1981; Lentz and Lowry 1989: 324; Parodi 2000). The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the most emblematic of Mughal monuments to determine what aspects might have been intended to evoke Timurid architecture. Where possible it is important to distinguish these elements from those which would occur as a natural result of the architect's training. If the architect was familiar with the sixteenth-century architecture of Shaybanid (Uzbek) Bukhara and Samarqand, which evolved from Timurid traditions, the canon of proportions and aesthetics that he brought to Mughal India might unconsciously imbue his new work with "Timuridity." One of the difficulties presented by this exercise is the absence of statements providing insight into this question. We lack textual testimony. Even if we had a comment by Shah Jahan himself, how would we evaluate it? Would it deal with a single element of the Taj complex, for example, such as the tall bulbous dome? Given that comments about artists in medieval treatises on painters and calligraphers are difficult to match with actualities, this kind of testimony might not be very useful, even if it did exist. Lacking verbal commentary, we shall turn to the architecture itself. The first task is to discover what were the characteristics of Timurid architecture, what we may call the *leitmotifs*, insofar as they had survived and could be witnessed by the Mughals.

The *Leitmotifs* of Timurid Architecture

The systematic study of Timurid architecture began with the invasion of the czarist Russian armies into the Timurid heartland in the second half of the nineteenth century. The government sponsored ambitious projects to conserve these impressive buildings. This activity was continued under the Soviet governments of the newly formed republics of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. Teams of

Russian archaeologists and architects, informed by the research of scholars such as V.V. Bartol'd, excavated foundations, subjected materials to scientific analysis, and examined all aspects of the architecture, including the theory of design (Bulatov, Rempel'). In addition to the study of individual monuments, great interest was shown in urban history (Belenitskii), the context of monuments, and the villa/garden. The most prolific scholar was G.A. Pugachenkova of the Institute of Fine Arts in Tashkent. Collaborating with L.I. Rempel', she made accessible the results of Soviet-era research on the medieval monuments of the major sites in the Uzbek Republic – Samarqand, Bukhara, Shahrisabz, and Khiva (Pugachenkova and Rempel' 1958). One of the most important contributions of this generation was to draw attention to the variety of arcuate forms that define Timurid architecture – the range of arches and vaulting solutions and the construction of double domes (Man'kovskaia 1985; Pugachenkova 1963). The main weakness in this work was that the monuments of the rest of the Timurid world, Iran and Afghanistan, were not accessible to these scholars until much later.

These other regions had been studied and recorded by a series of Austrian and German scholars – E. Diez, F. Sarre, E. Herzfeld, O. von Niedermayer – and by the team of A.U. Pope, who produced the great *Survey of Persian Art*. None of these works dealt as broadly with the subject as did the Central Asian scholars, and the presentation of monuments in the *Survey* is not always reliable. Pope and his team did make available a large photographic record, now all the more significant as many of the monuments have disappeared or undergone heavy restoration.[2]

With the goal of rectifying these shortfalls, scholars who could travel in all of the Timurid realms initiated a new era in this field, collecting information that had not yet been available in the West (Golombek, Wilber, O'Kane, McChesney). Their studies also incorporated the newly published compendiums of monuments and inscriptions coming out of Iran (Afshar, Honarfar). They were also able to comb the Persian and Arabic historical sources, which contain much valuable information on the dates, patrons, and descriptions of the buildings.[3] Of particular importance to the understanding of architectural practice and the transmission of designs was the analysis of a scroll of geometric designs for two- and three-dimensional ornament, found in the Topkapı Palace Museum and attributed to the Timurid period (Necipoğlu 1995). As for the architectural decoration itself, which plays so important a role in Timurid architecture, interest in analysis of the design is increasing, but more attention has yet to be paid to differentiating and understanding the wide range of techniques that evolved in ceramic tile decoration (O'Kane 2011).

Timurid architecture shows innovation in every aspect of the practice if we compare it with its predecessors. However, this innovation was built upon earlier progress in the technology of domes and vaults. This knowledge arrived in Timurid Central Asia with master craftsmen, brought by Timur from Iran, among whom one was worthy of special mention in the historical sources, Qawam al-Din Shirazi (see below). His name also appears in inscriptions as the master architect, as do the names of several other of his compatriots from Shiraz. The attention drawn to an architect by the Timurid biographers signals a new interest in the role of the individual architect in the creation of buildings associated with authority, parallel to the notices about prominent painters and calligraphers. This is a trend that would not be continued under the Mughals in India: while they mentioned their painters they hardly ever gave credit to their architects, and presented themselves as creators of their buildings. However, it did not keep them from seeking out the best talent from foreign lands, thus promoting the dissemination of ideas and technologies. Thus, the Timurid legacy passed from Samarqand to Herat, to Uzbek Bukhara, and thence to the Mughal realms.

The Mughals' ideas about Timur were shaped by actual experience through visits to Timurid cities as well as through testimonies in the literature. We shall take note of what failed to make a significant impression on the Mughals as well as what seems to have struck them as epitomizing the glory of their ancestors. Two major features of Timurid design do not seem to have caught on. These were the Timurid notions of urban planning and the signature tile revetments that enveloped their buildings. In the Mughal context the latter survived, with a few exceptions, mainly as a regional style at Lahore and were otherwise translated into stone intarsia in the mainstream buildings of Agra and Delhi. The preference for tiles at Lahore may be understood as a reflection of the indigenous brick architecture tradition of the Indus Valley region, in which tile revetment is commonly found.

Urban Spaces

Most Timurid cities had a fortified citadel, usually tangent to the city walls. In Samarqand the citadel lay just south of the Registan square. In Herat it straddled the northern side of the square walled city. Within these strongholds the ruler could safeguard the treasury and incarcerate troublesome subjects. Most government administration took place elsewhere, either in the large garden estates outside the city center, or in the *ordu*, the encampment. The government was not represented within the urban space by civil architectural buildings but by the religious monuments that it erected there – the Friday mosque, madrasas, and khanqahs.

Timurid cities generally had a major thoroughfare running through the city and serving as a covered bazaar. This type of urban model was an adaptation of the common configuration for cities found throughout the Iranian world. The second feature was the articulation of the public square through the construction of complementary buildings around its periphery. The square, or *maydan*, was common in Iranian cities, but under the Timurids it became the nucleus of an architectural ensemble, such as the Registan in Samarqand (Figure 32.1). Around it were situated a group of institutions, the madrasa and khanaqah of Ulugh Beg (Timur's grandson) and a mosque (Pugachenkova and Rempel' 1958: 126–132). Timurid ensembles proliferated in the years following Timur's death in all of the

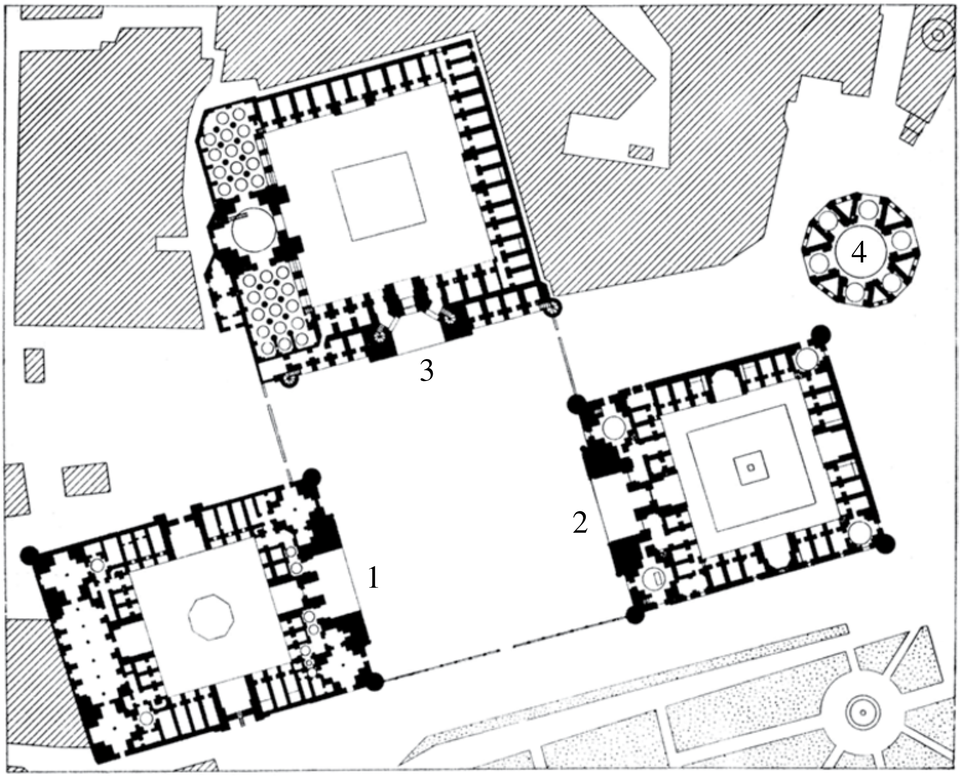

FIGURE 32.1 Registan Square in Samarqand: 1 Madrasa of Ulugh Beg (1417–1221); 2 Madrasa Shir Dar (1619–1636); 3 Tilleh-kari Mosque (1646–1660); 4 Chahar-su (commercial kiosk). Source: Pugachenkova and Rempel' 1958. Reproduced with permission of Rowman & Littlefield.

towns within the Timurid Empire. Their successors, the Uzbek Shaybanids, were particularly fond of ensembles, as found in Bukhara, or, under the later Uzbeks, at Balkh (McChesney 2009). The creation of ensembles around open space appealed in particular to the Timurids' taste for symmetry and order, about which we will have more to say below. These ensembles seem to have been comprised primarily of socioreligious, educational, and commercial institutions.

Timurid princes developed garden estates which were walled, but not fortified, as both administrative centers and a locus for pleasure and entertainment. The great garden estate of Sultan Husayn Bayqara (1470–1506) in Herat, known as the Jahan-ara'i (World-adorner), visited by Babur in 1506, is mentioned in Timurid literature as the site of both official and informal events (Allen 1981: no. 632, 195–198; Subtelny 2007: 94–96, 131–132). It had several buildings, including an administrative center. If the Mughals eventually abandoned the Timurid example of using garden estates as administrative centers, they did build numerous gardens, and we shall consider the garden form as a separate topic below.

Colossal Scale

Having looked first at Timurid urban planning, let us now turn to the architecture itself. Monumentality can be achieved through sheer size, but design can also create the impression of enormous scale. Timur's buildings were indeed very large, but other factors enhanced the sense of monumentality. One of the best examples of this use of design is the Friday mosque of Samarqand, built between 1398 and 1404 (Figure 32.2) (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, no. 28, 255–260). The perimeter of this mosque is a rectangle 109 × 167 m. The entrance portal and the domed sanctuary lie at opposite sides of an arcaded courtyard. The portal and sanctuary rise to such a height that they can be seen from afar, like great ships on the ocean of the urban fabric. The portal arch originally soared to a height of 19 m. The entrance and main prayer hall iwans open onto the arcaded courtyard and, together with the two smaller lateral iwans, form the classical Persian four-iwan plan. However, unlike in most Persian mosques, the lateral iwans are followed by domes. This innovation is thought to have been inspired by the Friday mosque of Jahanpanah, the Tughluq capital of north India, which Timur saw in Delhi during his conquest of the city in 1398 (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, 259). Four engaged corner towers, only a stump of one of them remaining, gave definition to the rectangle and probably carried high minarets. They anchor the mass

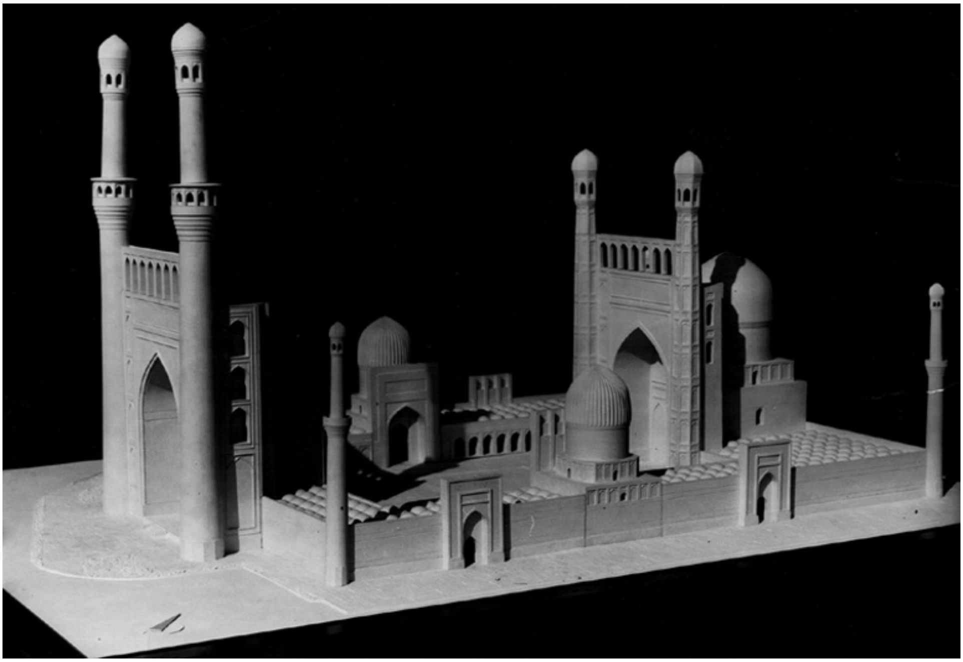

FIGURE 32.2 Model of the Friday mosque of Samarqand. Source: Pugachenkova 1966. Reproduced with permission.

and give it a sense of great stability, reflecting Timur's hope for the endurance of his new empire. Not only is the scale of this monument overpowering. Its design, with the major elements so much more massive than the delicate arcades joining them, evokes Timur's domination over his subjects, to whom one might compare the 400 stone columns that support the covered halls.

Not only was the viewer overwhelmed by the scale of Timur's buildings. They could not be missed, as they stood unobstructed by the clutter of houses in which public buildings were normally embedded in Iranian cities before then. Although the original context of most of the monuments has altered, that they were erected in isolation from the surroundings is confirmed by the presence of decoration over the entire exterior. While tomb towers and mausoleums often were cloaked in decorative brickwork or glazed tiles, before the Timurid period other types of buildings, particularly the large mosques and madrasas, stood bare except for those elements that peered over rooftops – domes, minarets, portals – or the internal façade. They left the exterior walls as bare brick because they did not consider the outward appearance of the building as a whole. Timur's buildings are completely draped in glazed tiles, assembled in patterns that look like masonry (hence are called *banna'i*, or "mason's" technique) or woven fabric (*hazar-baf*, or "a thousand-weaves"). The purpose of this type of decoration was to give clarity to the volume and to enhance the feeling of solidity, another trait one could relate to Timur's grip on power. His buildings are to be viewed from the exterior as well as the interior. Thus, the space around them must be clear. Accomplishing this in an open space, such as the site of the shrine of the Sufi shaykh Ahmad Yasavi in Turkestan City (1397–1399) (Figure 32.3), was not difficult, but creating such a space within a city required power. Timur's supporters could not have failed to be impressed – precisely what he hoped to achieve through his building program.

The popular shrine of Ahmad Yasavi (d. 1166) (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, no. 53, 284–288; Man'kovskaia 1985) is located far from the Timurid urban centers but would have been visible to the many Turkish troops whose semi-nomadic migrations would take them across the steppes. The building is rectangular, fronted by a soaring façade which concealed the large dome behind it (Figure 32.3). Like the other colossal buildings, its (unfinished) façade also had corner towers. As in the Friday mosque, the shrine shows a dramatic change in scale from the core of the building to the extreme height of the entrance vault, which matches the height of the dome behind it. This contrasting of scale between the substance of the building and its towering entrance exaggerates the actual height and gives Timur's monuments a majestic air.

While the entrance iwan and its flanking towers gave these buildings a sense of height, reaching toward the heavens, as the sources often say, it was the dome that caught the visitor's eye. Builders used two devices to raise the dome high above the roof. From the level of the roof rose a tall cylindrical or octagonal drum, usually enclosing the apex of the actual dome that overlies the room below. Then, rising from the perimeter of this drum was another dome, steeper and

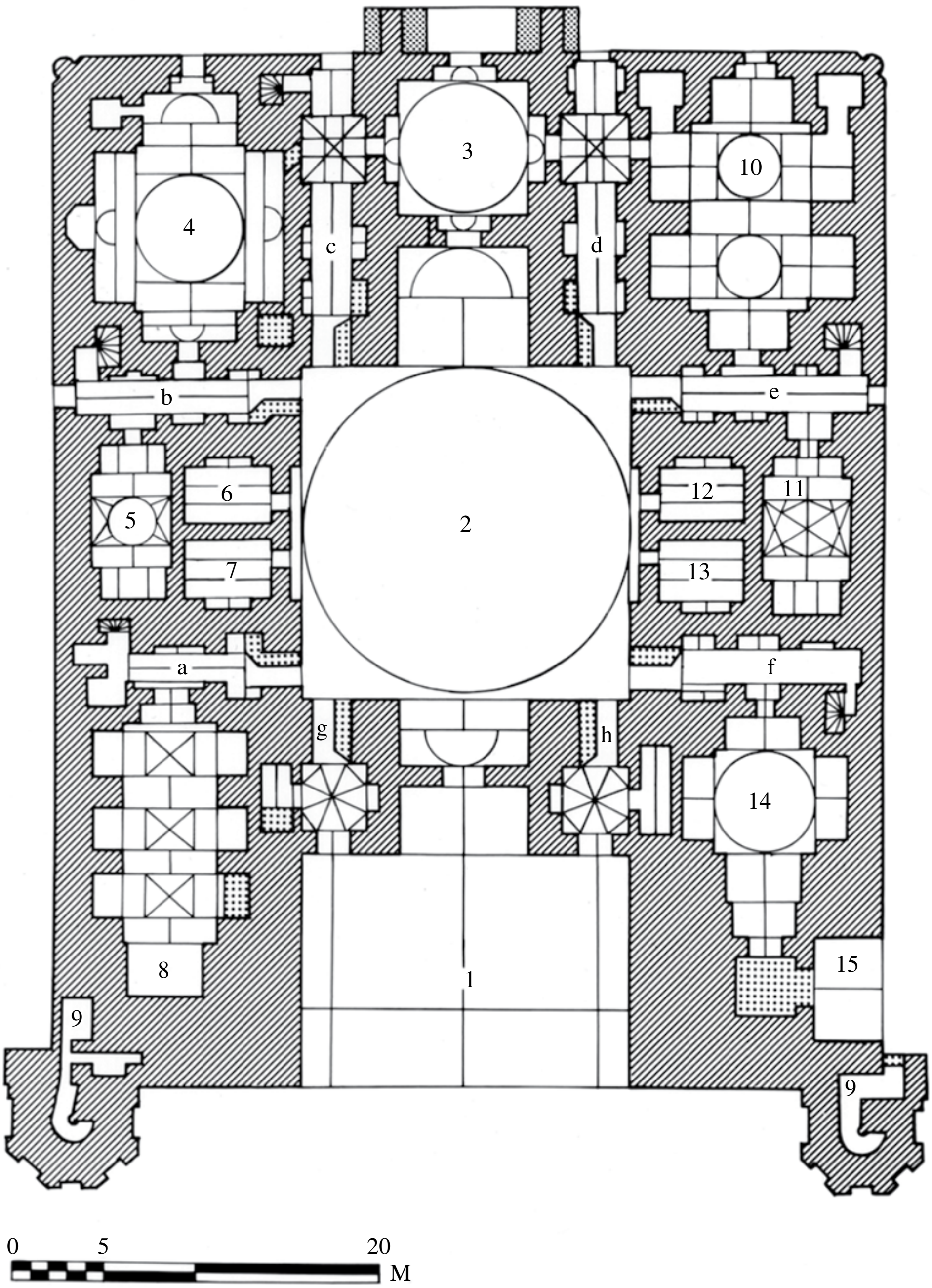
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FIGURE 32.3 Plan of the shrine of Ahmad Yasavi, Turkestan. Source: Man'kovskaia 1985. Reproduced with permission.

thinner than the one inside. It was supported by a series of vertical ribs or fins, attached to the exterior of the inner dome. Because this outer dome had little mass, it could be very tall (Figure 32.4). Its elliptical profile resembles the end of a melon, and the sense of height is further enhanced through vertical fluting, as in the Gur-i Amir, Timur's tomb in Samarqand (1404) (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, no. 29c, 261–263). Timur built this relatively modest structure for his nephew Muhammad Sultan, attached to the courtyard adjoining the latter's madrasa and khanqah, and was himself buried there. Under Ulugh Beg it became a dynastic tomb, which the Mughals several times sent funds to restore. Compared with Timur's other buildings, the mausoleum is small. Nevertheless,

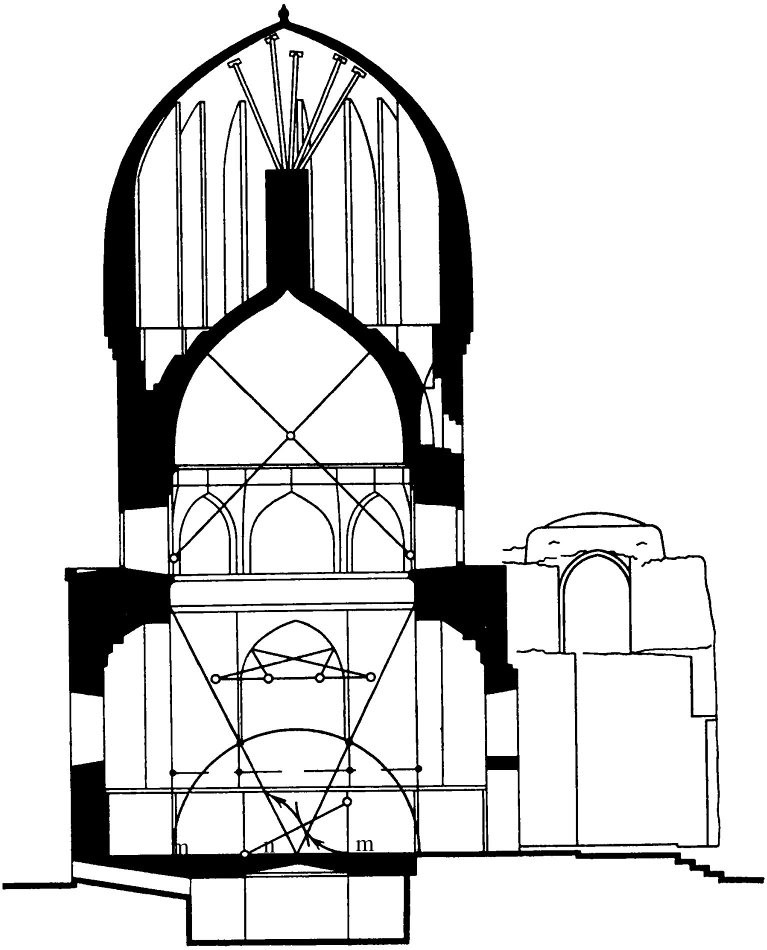

FIGURE 32.4 Section of the dome of the Gur-i Amir in Samarqand, showing the internal structure and geometric analysis of the proportions of the building. Source: Bulatov 1978. Reproduced with permission.

the tall drum and "melon"-shaped dome lend the structure an air of great majesty (Figure 32.4). The advantage of this double-dome system was to allow the architect freedom to sculpt in three dimensions whatever was called for, while ensuring that the inner dome remained stable.

Rationality of Design

From the outside, Timurid buildings assume simple forms – rectangular solids, cubes, or polygonal solids. Inside, however, the rooms may range widely in size and shape depending on the function and choice of superstructure. The shrine of Ahmad Yasavi has one of the most complex interiors in all of Persian architecture (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, no 53, 284–288) (Figure 32.3). From the outside the building appears to be a rectangular solid, giving no hint of the variety and range of rooms and vaults behind the walls. This deception is characteristic of Timurid architecture – the outside is easy to grasp, its clear lines emphasized through its continuous overall pattern of decorative tilework. However the building is to be used, a penchant for symmetry dictates the distribution of rooms, courtyards, and passageways and also the treatment of the major and minor façades. This is also evidenced by the repetition of architectural elements employing a fixed canon of proportions and arch templates for the entrance portal (*pishtaq*), the arcade (open or blind), and the minarets or corner towers.

The buildings commissioned by Timur's successors retain this overarching principle. The madrasa of Ulugh Beg in Samarqand (1417–1421) (Figure 32.1, no. 1) (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, no. 30, 263–265) displays many of the same characteristics as Timur's buildings: the contrast between the height of the entrance iwan and the flanks of the façade, the anchoring of the building at the corners by very tall minarets, and the ornamentation of the entire exterior. However, because of its function as a madrasa, like the shrine at Turkestan, it was designed to accommodate many different activities. As a school it had classroom space, consisting of interior rooms as well as the courtyard iwans. As a residential institution it needed dormitories, which are disposed around the courtyard on two levels. A large prayer hall occupies the wing opposite the entrance, and some of the interior rooms must have been allotted to staff as dwellings. All of these spaces have been arranged in a rational order, following the laws of symmetry and what might be called "geometric harmony" (Bulatov 1988). The allegiance to symmetry is so strong that it appears to ignore the functions to be assigned to each space, with the exception of the long hall that serves as the mosque. The symmetry develops around the two axes formed by the four iwans of the courtyard. The most striking solutions to organizing the space are to be found in the wing that lies behind the entrance façade. The *pishtaq* is very wide because it contains not only the main entrance into the courtyard but also two doors that give access to the corner rooms behind the façade. This assemblage, that is, the *pishtaq* and the two domed halls with their system of corridors, constituting an "entrance block," became one of the most innovative areas for spatial design that occur in Timurid architecture, as well as in its Uzbek successors (see the later mosque and madrasa in Figure 32.1, nos. 3 and 2).

This enhancement of the act of entering a special space most likely derived from Timurid palace architecture, such as the great gate of Timur's palace, the Aq Saray (White Palace) in Shahrisabz (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, no. 39, 271–275), and repeated as the portal to his mosque in Samarqand. The idea of punctuating the entrance to an important space with a gate-block seems to have penetrated Mughal architecture, either carried forward by Central Asian architects or selected by the Mughal patrons for its ceremonial character, conveying power.

The Timurid building type that best illustrates a love for symmetry is the centralized plan of eight parts around a central core, the *hasht-bihisht* (eight heavens). The surviving examples all seem to date from the second half of the fifteenth century, although the plan must have been popular much earlier (Jairazbhoy 1961), as descriptions of Timur's garden pavilions by Clavijo, the Spanish envoy to Timur (*c.* 1404) confirm (Clavijo 1928: 216, 227, 230). Clavijo described these as having a cross-in-square plan, with a domed space in the center of the cross and the axial spaces transformed into vaulted halls. These were used as openings to the outside or as a special place reserved for the throne. The corners of the square building were divided into rooms that filled the spaces between the axial halls. Thus, the building was composed of eight rooms and a dome chamber, making it the perfect embodiment of the mystical concept of the "eight heavens." As such, it was appropriate for mausoleums, connoting the celestial paradise, as well as for garden pavilions, connoting the terrestrial paradise. In the more exotic plans the corner spaces are transformed into octagons or into a second corona of rooms around the central core. The entire design can be reconstructed through geometry, following the radii that emanate from the central dome chamber.

One of the best examples of the Timurid *hasht-bihisht* plan can be found in the mausoleum of ʿAbd al-Razzaq b. Ulugh Beg b. Abu Saʿid, governor of Ghazni and Kabul in 1501–1502 (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, no. 65, 299; Hoag 1968). However, because he was too young and power was immediately wrested from him, we have attributed the construction to his father, Ulugh Beg, son of Abu Saʿid, who ruled from 1460 to 1502. The building is planned around a central dome chamber, opening on four sides into deep alcoves that lead into rectangular spaces parallel to the sides of the central square. These long rooms are closed by semi-octagonal bays that have doorways in the center, leading into small square rooms. The interior appears to consist of two nested squares – the square containing the central dome, and the square formed by these rectangular and square rooms surrounding it. The most famous example of this pavilion type from the Timurid period has disappeared. It was built within the palace grounds of the

Aqqoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan (1453–1478) at Tabriz and was described at length by several European travelers (Woods 1976: 150). We shall return to the *hasht-bihisht* plan in discussing Timurid gardens.

Construction Technology: Supports and Vaults

Under this heading we discuss those features which represent innovative techniques of construction under the Timurids that eventually became standard features of Central Asian, Iranian, and, in a modified form, Mughal architecture. Timurid architects seem to have been obsessed with making supporting walls "disappear." Already in the fourteenth century in Yazd and Isfahan, architects were experimenting with transverse vaults (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, 102; Pugachenkova 1963). By bridging an open space with a pair of parallel arches and connecting them with another pair of arches set on the shoulders of these, the architect could construct a small domical vault. As it did not rest on walls, this vault appeared to float in space. A succession of such transverse arches thrown across a rectangular hall made it possible to dispense with the heaviness of the barrel vault. The spaces between the arches could be pierced by windows, creating a clerestory that admitted light. From this technology the successors to these Iranian architects, who emigrated to Transoxiana to work for Timur, developed the great domed halls that lie behind the façades of madrasas, such as that of Ulugh Beg in Samarqand.

This technology advanced further under the aegis of Shahrukh's court architect Qawam al-Din (*c.* 1410–1438 or 1440) (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, 189–194). He built major mosques and madrasas for the ruler and his queen Gawhar Shad, but also for the vizier, Pir Ahmad. At Khargird, situated on the road between Mashhad and Herat, where the vizier held significant properties, Qawam al-Din designed a madrasa. Like most Timurid madrasas, the Khargird building is symmetrical and has a complex entrance block (O'Kane 1976). From the entrance vestibule beyond the portal, doors on either side lead into two extraordinary dome chambers (Figure 32.5). Both halls are examples of the square dome chamber with deep arched niches (*chahar-taq*, "four-arches") that allowed the architect to do away with the need for solid walls and a squinch zone. Prior to this innovation, domes in Persian architecture rose above solid walls on which an octagonal zone of transition was built to reduce the square of the room to the circle of the dome. The traditional system emphasized the horizontal. The new system provided four tangent barrel vaults on which a dome could be set. In the prayer hall (the room to the right of the entrance) short recumbent arches bridge the gaps between the arches, forming eight resting points for the dome. However, in the room on the left, the niche vaults intersect in the corners rather than standing tangent to each other. From this armature a network of plaster ribs was hung to give the impression that the intersection of arches was carried all the way up to the dome. Thus, it appears to the viewer that the dome, raised even higher on top of a lantern drum, is floating in midair. Timurid architects strove for height, and when large-scale building was not

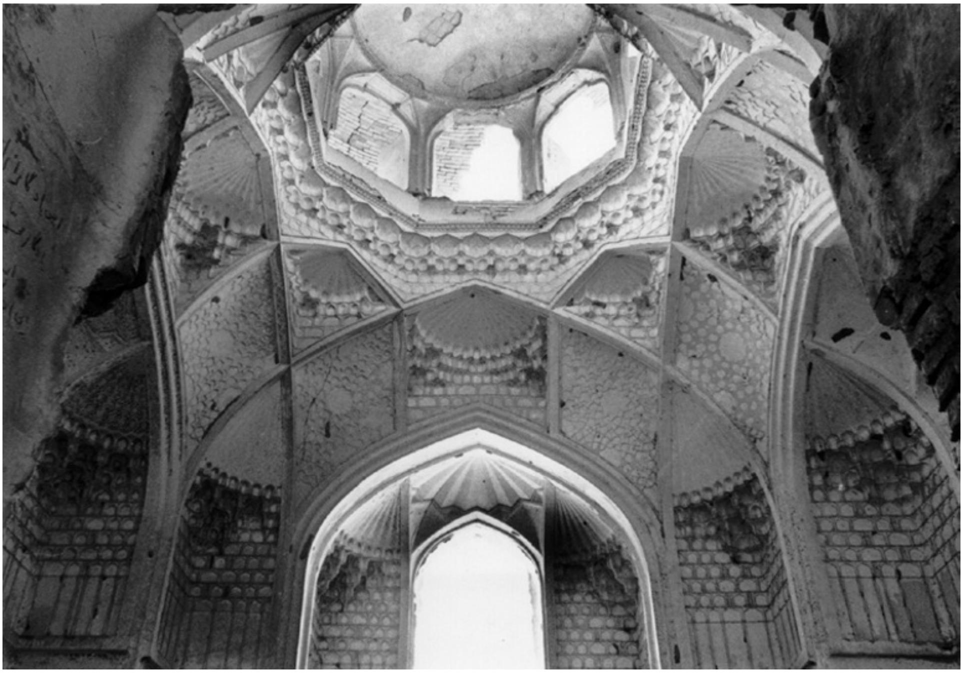

FIGURE 32.5 Interior of the dome chamber left of the entrance in the madrasa at Khargird. Source: Lisa Golombek.

feasible, they invented ways to give the illusion of height. In the new four-alcove dome chamber no horizontal barriers re-directed the view away from the highest point in the room.

Similarly, the "arch-net," a decorative device that developed out of the notion of intersecting ribs, could be seen as a standard Central Asian feature by the sixteenth century. The entire vault became a stellate design, based on rotated squares (Golombek and Wilber 1988: vol. 1, 169–172). All Timurid buildings from 1445 onward have some form of stellate vault. Initially, these were constructed in the masonry, but soon they were fabricated entirely from plaster, either in molds, which were then assembled when attached to the masonry, or simply created from the bottom up, "free-hand," by the mason, as could be witnessed in Isfahan as late as 1974. This type of faceting is often referred to as "squinch-net," but as there are no squinches, the term "arch-net" seems preferable. Common masons' terms for this device include *yazdi-bandi* (in the manner of builders from Yazd) and *rasmi-sazi* (construction based on a drawing).

Architectural Ornament

Timurid architects carried forward the growing intensity of architectural decoration in glazed tile and painting that had been developing in Iran and Central Asia since the eleventh century and particularly under the Ilkhanids and their successors (Wilber 1955). The circulation of designs for architectural ornament, both two- and three-dimensional (*muqarnas*), was facilitated through the medium of paper, on sheets or in scrolls (Necipoğlu 1995). The most extraordinary innovations were to be found in the extensive use of glazed tiles resembling brickwork, mentioned above. The new elliptical domes were also tiled a cobalt blue, contrasting strongly with the buff-colored ground of the *banna'i* decoration of the supporting walls. Mosaic-faience panels, composed of thousands of cut-up glazed tiles, were reserved for accents, especially on portals and the interior. The less costly *cuerda seca* tiles tended to be used instead (O'Kane 2011). They could be produced as square or polygonal tiles and rapidly set in place. At the Shah-i Zindah cemetery complex in Samarqand (eleventh–fifteenth centuries) some of the later mausoleums are entirely reveted inside with such tiles. Large patterns spread over many tiles could be produced more efficiently than by using mosaic-faience. Geometric, vegetal, and calligraphic ornament drew upon the wide repertory of design developed by Timurid artists for book illumination and textiles, patterns for which were produced in the court ateliers and could be circulated widely for use in a wide range of media. Most plasterwork was painted with arabesque patterns related to other Timurid arts, such as leather bookbindings (Lentz and Lowry 1989). The exceptions are to be found in mausoleums where vegetation, particularly trees, was painted in a fairly naturalistic style, suggestive of the paradise gardens appropriate for a tomb (Golombek 1993; O'Kane 2005). Carved stone decoration was rare except for moldings and colonettes.

Garden Design

No Timurid gardens survive, but the evidence of texts and some archaeological data help us to reconstruct these gardens and to gain insight into the royal ceremonial and pastimes that took place there (Golombek 1995).[4] Timurid paintings depict life in the gardens and give a sense of the beauty of the architecture and the vegetation. Timur's gardens are described in the Persian chronicles but are also known to us through the reports of the Spanish envoy Clavijo, to whom we referred earlier. Two Timurid gardens in Samarqand are known archaeologically. For Herat the descriptions of the early gardens are sparse (Allen 1983), but for the later ones, several sources, including Babur (who visited them in 1506), have proven valuable (see relevant passages in Babur 1996). One of the most important sources is a treatise on agriculture which describes in detail both the architectural elements of the garden and its plantings (Subtelny 1993). Some traces of Timurid gardens in Herat are visible in old aerial photographs (Allen 1983).

Two variations of the formal garden (*chahar-bagh*) seem to have existed in the fifteenth century. In Timur's time the gardens were walled square spaces divided into quadrants by cross-axial water channels, forming the *chahar-bagh* (quadripartite garden) for which landscape architecture in Iran and Central Asia is famous (Fairchild Ruggles 2008: chapter 4). In the center, where the water axes intersect, a pavilion was erected. In most cases the pavilion was at least two stories high and its interior was divided into nine spaces – a central domed space surrounded by eight spaces, thus, the classic *hasht-bihisht* plan described above. Sometimes a colonnade replaced the external iwan as in Ulugh Beg's Chehel Sutun (lit. "forty columns") at Samarqand (Pougatchenkova 1981: fig. 34d), which genre could have been the model for the Ottoman Çinili Köşk built within the Topkapı Saray in 1472. The pavilion could be set on a patio or might lie on top of a hill, as in the Daulatabad garden of Timur near Samarqand (Masson 1928; Pugachenkova 1987: 177–178). The quadrants of the garden were further divided by smaller canals, serving to irrigate the garden but also functioning as pathways, interrupted at intervals by pools. This type of garden places the owner in the very center of paradise, described in the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (hadith) as the biblical garden with four rivers (Genesis 2: 10–14; Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 52:48). He can look out in all directions but does not command a view of the whole.

The second variant of the *chahar-bagh* is described by the author of the agricultural treatise, Qasim b. Yusuf, who was well acquainted with the landscape architects of the day (Subtelny 1993). He held an official position in the government of Sultan Husayn Bayqara and was in charge of monitoring the distribution of water in Herat; he then served the Uzbek court in Bukhara and would subsequently serve the Mughals, thereby establishing a direct link of transmission. He describes the model *chahar-bagh* as having its pavilion, not in the center of the garden but at one end. It was fronted by a patio on which was situated an ornamental pool. Beyond this lay the quadripartite garden with its main canal leading away from the pavilion, intersected by the lateral canal that divided the layout of the garden plots into four sections. Within each section were nine planted plots. The great garden estate of Sultan Husayn known as the Jahan-araʾi in Herat, visited by Babur in 1506, is mentioned in Timurid literature as the site of both official and informal events (Allen 1981: no. 632, 195–198; Subtelny 2007: 94–96, 131–132). It had several buildings, including an administrative center.

A second late Timurid garden appears to the west of the funerary shrine of the Sufi shaykh, Khvajeh ʿAbd Allah Ansari, at Gazurgah outside Herat. Based on texts and old photographs Terry Allen identified the remains as those of the garden estate (*Baghcheh*) of ʿAli-Shir Navaʾi, Sultan Husayn's confidant (Allen 1981: no. 657; Allen 1983: fig. 1; Ball 1981). It was a multicourtyard ensemble, with a large square *chahar-bagh* behind a monumental entrance portal. A large pool lay at the intersection of the cross-axial channels, and a pavilion stood at the end, facing the entrance. Beyond the pavilion lay a smaller courtyard with its own pool and a pavilion along its east side, possibly polygonal in form. Thus, here was an example of a garden estate with its main pavilion at the end of the actual garden rather than in its midst. It is this type of arrangement that seems to be described in the agricultural treatise by Qasim b. Yusuf, mentioned earlier. The garden with its pavilion at one end was a module that could be repeated or introduced into larger compositions. The main difference between it and the pavilion-centered garden was that the visitor could visualize the entire "paradise" without moving beyond the pavilion.

Mughal Architecture – Assessing the Timurid Legacy

Mughal sources offer few explicit comments on the traditions from which the great Mughal architectural synthesis drew its inspiration: Central Asian styles merged with those of the different regions of India, and with Iranian and even European elements. The built architecture is our best evidence. This is even true for the time of Shah Jahan when the methodical appraisal of architecture became a new theme of Mughal primary sources and systematic descriptions of the emperor's building projects formed a subgenre of imperial chronicles and of eulogistic poetry (Begley and Desai 1989; Joshi 2010; Kanbo 1967–1972; Koch 1991: 143; Koch 2013: 351–353; Lahawri 1866–1872; Nath 2005). Such scientific assessments of architecture give expression to a distinct interest of Shah Jahan, as they do not appear so consistently elsewhere in Mughal India and the Persian-speaking world.

Modern research on Mughal architecture began in the second half of the nineteenth century, after the British conquest of Agra and Delhi in 1803. In 1861 the Archaeological Survey of India was founded with the initial agenda to survey and record the historical monuments, to which conservation was eventually added. But the resulting publications included surprisingly few monographs of Mughal sites (Cole 1884; Smith 1894–1898/1985; Smith 1909/1994) and consisted instead of detailed descriptions of buildings focusing on their ornament as a potential model for industrial design (Smith 1894–1898/1985: vol. 1, xii). No scientific documentation and analysis was ever devoted to the entire Taj Mahal complex until the early twenty-first century (Koch 2006a). The history of Mughal architecture was only considered in the context of general works (Brown 1957, 1975; Fergusson 1972; Havell 1927) and here the treatment of the buildings confined itself to general characterizations, a more detailed syncretistic analysis being hampered by the limited number of recorded monuments, the lack of available measured drawings, and the paucity of accessible primary sources. Furthermore the identification of regional styles which led to the formation of Mughal architecture was overshadowed by the categorization of "Hindu" and "Muslim" ("Muhammadan," "Saracenic," "Islamic") which reflected the colonial approach of the British to "divide and rule" (Metcalf 1989). Trabeate constructions were classified as "Hindu," and arches and domes as "Muslim" (e.g., Brown 1957: 540; Fergusson 1972: vol. 2, 292–293). The issue divided scholars and led to a heated debate between those who saw Mughal architecture as an Islamic style (Fergusson, Smith) and those who denied or minimized foreign influences (Havell). The shapes of domes and arches became key elements of the debate and here Timurid and Persian architecture entered the discussion. Fergusson expressed the hope that the Russian takeover of Central Asia would facilitate access to Timurid buildings which would throw light upon the origins of Mughal architecture. He pointed out the similarities between Mughal domes and the bulbous domes of Samarqand and Iran and noted that the decoration with tiles was common to all three regions (Fergusson 1972: vol. 2, 286). Muhammad Abdulla Chaghatai made extensive use of newly available Russian government publications to go deeper into the issue and devoted a whole chapter of his *Le Tadje Mahal d'Agra* (1938) to the architectural connections between Central Asia, Iran, and India. But in the following discussion the distinction between Timurid and Persian architecture became again blurred which is also true of Brown's classical study *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)* (1942; with numerous later editions), despite the author's having given more space to the identification of regional styles than to "Hindu"/"Muslim" interaction.

After India's independence in 1947, the institution of Archaeological Survey of India was maintained and a new Department of Archaeology was created in Pakistan. The divide had also an impact on scholarship. In India the survey and documentation of monuments of the Islamic (Mughal) period (which was seen as an earlier form of colonialism) was largely left to the initiative of individuals (Koch 1991, 2006; Parihar 2006; Petruccioli 1988), but even in Pakistan which identifies strongly with the Mughal heritage (in Lahore a popular name is Timur), only a few studies in Mughal architectural history were undertaken, again either devoted to individual monuments (Chaghatai 1972, 1975; Khan 2011) or as chapters in general treatments of Islamic architecture in the subcontinent (Khan 2003; Mumtaz 1985). The first monographic treatments of the history of Mughal architecture appeared only in the later twentieth century (Asher 1992; Koch 1991; Nath 1982, 1985, 1994, 2005) and now also the iconology of architecture was thematized (Begley 1979; Koch 1982, 2001). Until today Mughal architecture is still comparatively little studied and more attention has been given to Mughal gardens (Crowe *et al.* 1972; Hussain, Rehman, and Wescoat, 1996; Kausar, Brand, and Wescoat 1990; Koch 1997a, 1997b, Petruccioli 1994, 1997; Rehman 2001; Villiers-Stuart 1913, Wescoat and Wolschke-Bulmahn 1996).

The "Hindu" and "Muslim" issue inherited from the colonial period continues to inform much of what is written about Indian architecture, and since Mughal architecture relates to both there is a certain resistance to include it within the framework of Islamic architecture. The argument of Havell has been revived with renewed polemic by the Institute of Rewriting Indian History founded by P.N. Oak in 1964 (e.g., Oak 1974), whose adherents claim an Indian origin for nearly all forms, though even R. Nath, the most prolific art historian of this school, concedes a "Persian inspiration" for the "high, bulbous double-dome at Delhi, e.g. at Subz Burj and … the tomb of Humayun" for which he adduces the dome of Gur-i Amir at Samarqand [Figure 32.4] as a comparative example (Nath 1982: 210, pl. CXLVI [with wrong caption]). Jairazbhoy (1961), Hoag (1968), Golombek (1981) and

Koch (1982) undertook more detailed investigations into the connections between Central Asian and Mughal architecture, especially after Pougatchenkova (1981), O'Kane (1987), and Golombek and Wilber (1988) had made Timurid and Uzbek architecture and the findings of the Soviet research on it more accessible. Asher (1992: 15–17) briefly acknowledged the Timurid and Shaybanid antecedents of Mughal architecture but classified them again under "the Iranian tradition."

City Planning

Our most comprehensive source of the Timurid transition into India is Babur's autobiography where he writes that his main architectural activities were directed towards the creation of gardens with an aim to establish the Timurid garden tradition on the banks of the river Yamuna at Agra, the previous capital of the Lodi sultans (Babur 1996: 359–361). The determinant for the riverfront garden was the geography of Hindustan with the available water source in the form of a large river (Koch 1997a/2001). The Timurid gardens that Babur had seen along the canals surrounding Herat might have reconciled him with the Indian riverfront landscape, about which he had initially nothing good to say as the site for his gardens. Earlier he had founded gardens in Kabul and other parts of present-day Afghanistan and consequently the Indians (*mardum-i Hind*) called the new Mughal gardens on the banks of the Yamuna "Kabul," which shows that they were considered as new and foreign (Babur 1996: 360). Babur's successors expanded the riverfront city and by the late sixteenth century Mughal Agra consisted of bands of residential and funerary gardens lining the Yamuna on both sides (for this and the following see Koch 2006a: chapter 1). The new Mughal city had thus a suburban character and even its most prominent building, the Taj Mahal (1632–1643, completed 1648), was built a century later as part of Agra's riverfront landscape. The scheme was partially realized in other cities of the empire, at Lahore and Ahmadabad.

Mughal urban planning flourished with new and decisive impulses under Shah Jahan. To develop Agra also inland, he ordered in 1637 the insertion of a large bazaar in the form of an irregular octagon with four longer and four shorter sides (which the Mughals designated with the enigmatic term *muthamman baghadadi*, meaning Baghdadi octagon) as an organizing link between the riverfront palace fortress and the inland projected Friday mosque (Jamiʿ Masjid) that was completed only in 1648. The creation of an urban ensemble around an octagonal plaza (demolished in 1858 by the British) stands by itself in India, a pointedly geometric Mughal response to the urban spaces of Central Asia and to the Iranian tradition of urban plazas (*maidan*s).

The preoccupation with large-scale geometrical shapes and octagons in an urban context determines also the plan of the fortress palace, called the Red Fort, of Shah Jahan's new city Shahjahanabad (1639–1648) in Delhi. It is laid out as a giant oblong Baghdadi octagon, the longer sides of which measure *c.* 656 m, the shorter sides *c.* 328 m, and the corner chamfers *c.* 116 m, but modified in the execution. The "democratic" scheme of Agra where, besides the emperor and the princes, royal women and the nobility had access to riverfront sites, was abandoned in Shahjahanabad. Now the riverfront was almost exclusively used for the palace where the main courtyards and gardens form a band overlooking the Yamuna; most of the nobles had to build their residences within the city (Koch 1997a: 144–145). A covered bazaar on the landward side of the palace extended on the north–south axis in the form of a large street into the city, a second street running east–west formed the other determining artery. The rest of Shahjahanabad was built by infill. The covered bazaar, new and unique in India as the historian Kanbo assures us, was an afterthought and modeled on an Iranian-type bazaar, which Shah Jahan had seen in 1646 at Peshawar during his Balkh and Badakhshan campaigns (Kanbo 1967–1972: vol. 2, 391; Koch 1991: figs 130–131). At this time, when the Mughals were preoccupied with regaining their Timurid homelands, an awareness of Timur's covered bazaar of Samarqand might have heightened the interest in this design.

Gardens

Formally laid out gardens functioned for the Mughals as they did for the Timurids, as open air palaces and were indispensable for the Mughal lifestyle. The Mughals also made them the setting for their tombs. Babur calls his first garden at Agra, laid out in 1526, a *chahar-bagh*, like some of his earlier gardens in present-day Afghanistan. Babur used the term in its widest sense, not necessarily for a garden on a strict cross-axial plan but rather for large architecturally planned gardens with intersecting raised paved walkways, platforms, and pools. He even called his rock cut garden at Dholpur a *chahar-bagh* (Koch 2007; Moynihan 1988).

After Babur the Mughals did not use the term *chahar-bagh* very much; in Shahjahani sources it is employed metaphorically, for the earth or the terrestrial "*chahar-bagh* of the world" (Kanbo 1967–1972: 1, 270). Otherwise, a garden was usually called just *bagh*, garden (or *baghcheh* for smaller versions). Still, we owe to the Mughals the grandest and most consistently planned *chahar-bagh*s in the entire history of garden architecture. The Timurid garden with its pavilion at one end proved itself as the ideal solution for the riverfront garden in which the main building was put on a terrace overlooking the river; the design found its most spectacular expression in the Taj Mahal.

Rationality of Design

Monumentality and rationality, prominent characteristics of Timur's buildings were given a new and spectacular Mughal expression in the mausoleum of Babur's son Humayun at Delhi (1562–1571). The *chahar-bagh* and the Timurid centralized plan of nine parts, the *hasht-bihisht*, were here combined on a new scale in a grandiose manifesto of the transformation of Timurid ideas into the new Mughal idiom. The large domed mausoleum on a podium was erected by the builders of the young Akbar (Humayun's son and successor) in response to Timur's tomb at Samarqand, and at the same time as an answer to the tombs of the Delhi sultans, which reached an apogee with the monumental tomb of Humayun's rival Sher Shah Sur at Sassaram (1545) in eastern India (Lowry 1987).

Humayun's tomb was set in the center of a large *chahar-bagh* at the crossing of the two main garden avenues (*khiyabans*), and the combination of tomb and formal garden established the prototype for future Mughal funerary gardens (Figure 32.6). In the tomb, four radially symmetrical *hasht-bihisht* units occupy

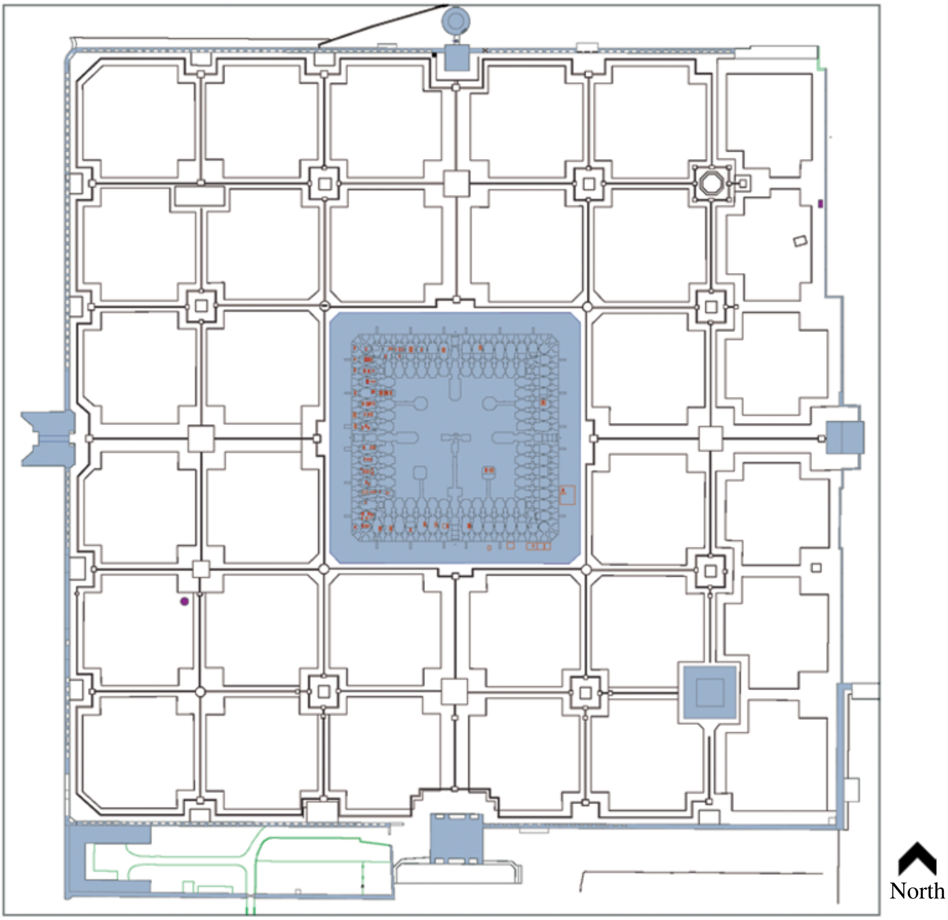

FIGURE 32.6 Tomb of Humayun at Delhi, built between 1562 and 1571, plan of the garden showing in the center the platform of the tomb with surrounding rooms and burial chambers. The so-called Tomb of the Barber dated 1590–1591 is situated in the southeast corner of the garden. Source: Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Reproduced with permission.

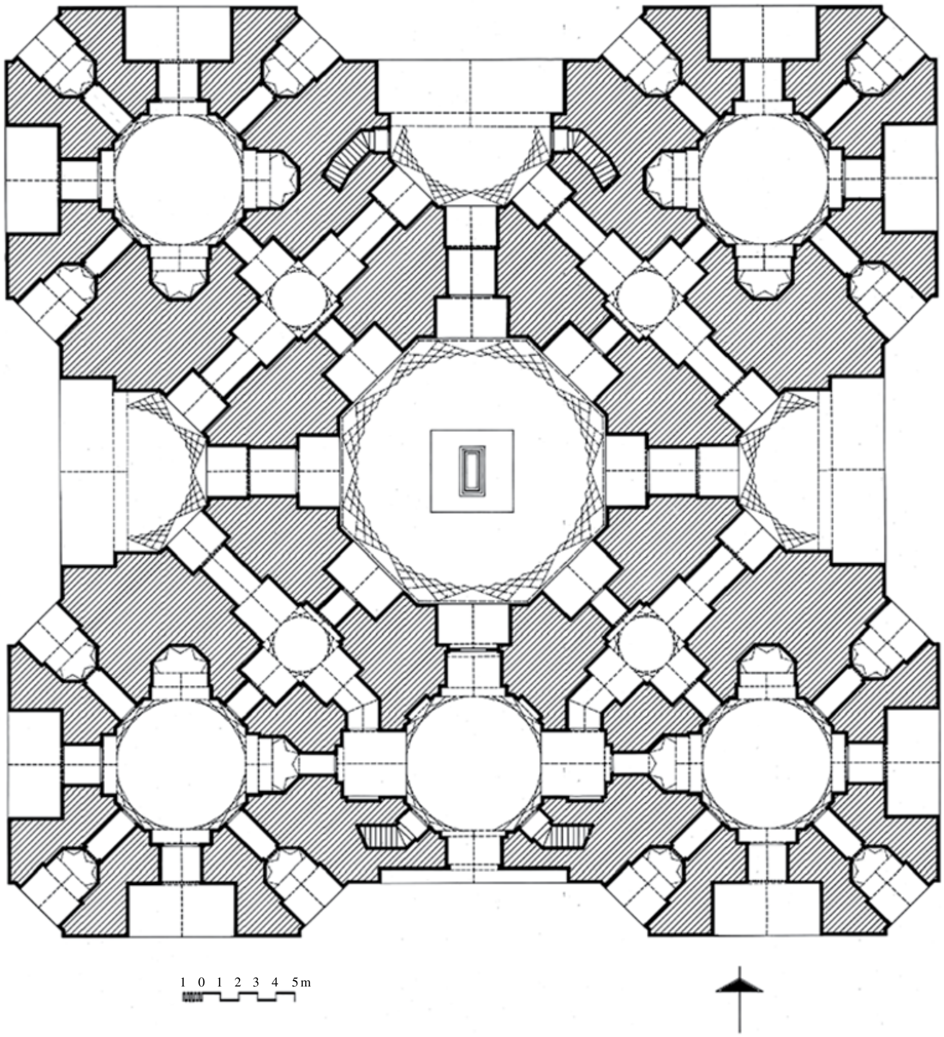

Figure 32.7 Tomb of Humayun, ground plan of the tomb structure on the platform. Source: Drawing R. A. Barraud and © Ebba Koch.

the corners of the overall structure, which in itself follows the ninefold plan (Figure 32.7). Thus, the typical was used to produce the outstanding. The builder of the mausoleum was Sayyid Muhammad, son of Mirak-i Sayyid Ghiyath from late Timurid Herat and Uzbek Bukhara, which has been mentioned above as a place where Timurid architecture had strong influence (Subtelny 1997:114). The ingenious composition was inspired by a wooden boat palace devised by Humayun himself (Golombek 1981: 48; Jairazbhoy 1961): his historian Khwandamir reports that the floating structure was made of four two-story pavilions (*chahar-taq*) on boats joined together with four arches (*taq*). The four pavilions and four arches enclosed an octagonal pool which in the tomb is replaced by the domed hall in the center (Khwandamir 1940 [Persian text]: 52–56; 1940 [trans.]: 37–40). But although the idea of generating a superimposed form with smaller versions of itself does occur in Timurid geometrical designs (Necipoğlu 1995), here it has more to do with Indian conceptions of micro-architecture and self-referential buildings (Koch 2006a: 27, 103; Lambourn 2010). It is applied to generate a ground plan and the interrelationship of the parts also extends to the garden because the subdivisions of the *chahar-bagh* correspond in turn to a nine-part design.

Such complex and interrelated solutions aiming at perfect symmetry extend Timurid geometry to new horizons, moving toward even more systematic planning principles. Here we find a *hasht-bihisht* plan that is entirely successful on the exterior, a strong contrast to even the most symmetrically conceived *hasht-bihisht* plans of late Timurid architecture, such as the mausoleum of ʻAbd al-Razzaq b. Ulugh Beg at Ghazni (1501–1502), which features a much less coherent elevation (Hoag 1968; Golombek and Wilber 1988, 1: 299; 2: pl. 145, fig. 70; Pougatchenkova 1981: 182–184). We can, however, only judge from the preserved evidence since a large number of *hasht-bihisht* pavilions are not preserved, most famously the Aqqoyunlu *hasht–bihisht* in Tabriz, which could have served as inspiration to use the design in a funerary structure (Jairazbhoy 1961).

Humayun's tomb has a facing of red sandstone in which each structural element of the elevation is lined with white marble (Figure 32.8). In this, the Mughals elaborated an architectural praxis which had already been adopted by the Delhi sultans[5] (Lowry 1987: 140–141) which in turn conforms to older Indian concepts, laid down in architectural treatises (*shastras*). These theoretical Sanskrit texts about art and building recommended white colored stones for the buildings of Brahmins, the priestly caste, and red ones for those of the *kshatriyas*, the warrior caste. The synthesis of the two colors had an auspicious connotation. By adopting the use of white and red of sultanate buildings, the Mughals represented themselves architecturally in the terms of the two highest levels of the Indian social system (Koch 2006a: 215–217). It is characteristic of their approach that they employed the symbolically highly charged color dualism with a studied rationality and intentionality in a much wider context than the Tughluq sultans before them. Within the overall red and white conception of Humayun's tomb, Timurid tile cladding was not entirely forgotten. The small domical roof kiosks *(chhatris)* around the large white central dome were originally covered with tile mosaic (only recently renovated by the conservation architect Ratish Nanda of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture) and presented a distinctly visible Timurid reference on the outside of the building (Figure 32.8).

With Humayun's tomb, the Mughals set an example of successful architectural synthesis and made their own imperial statement in Delhi, the old capital of the sultans. Also, from the very beginning Humayun's tomb became a site of dynastic cult and was revered like the tomb of a saint during the pious visitations (*ziyarat*)

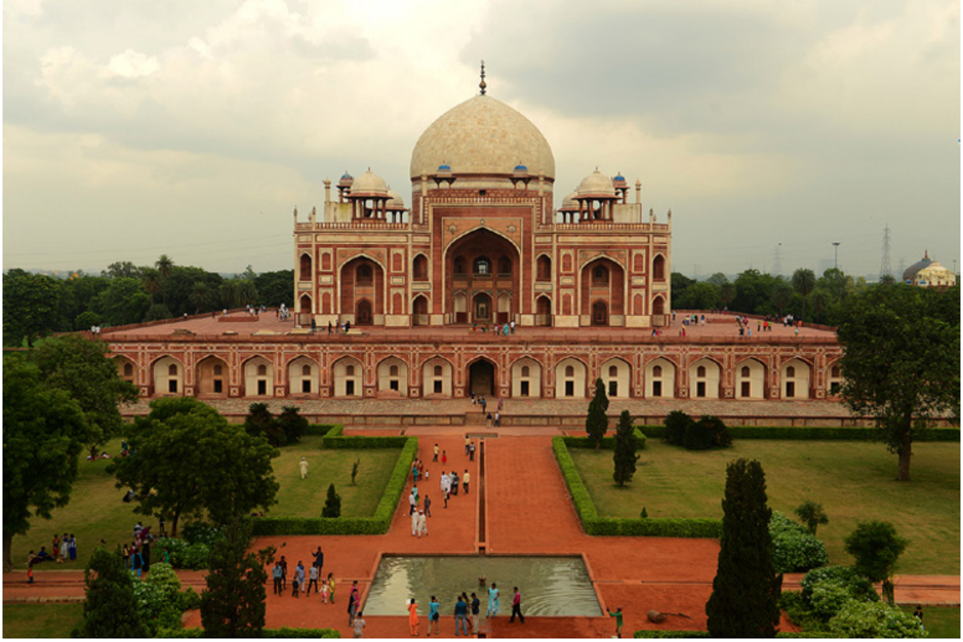

FIGURE 32.8 Tomb of Humayun after its restoration by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, seen from the west. The restoration included the facing of the niches in the platform with white stucco plaster (*chunam*) and the renovation of the original tile mosaic of the small kiosks (chhatris) topping the frames of the grand entrance niches (*pishtaqs*). Source: Photograph by Narendra Swain, courtesy of Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Reproduced with permission.

of Mughal emperors whenever they came to Delhi and performed ritual circumambulation (*tawaf*) (Koch 1993).

The *hasht-bihisht* was the architectural scheme about which the Mughals thought most intensely. They varied this centrally symmetrical plan type in tombs, garden pavilions, and *hammam*s in ever new but always perfectly symmetrical versions. The *hasht-bihisht* design finds its most balanced and harmonious expression in the Taj Mahal (Koch 2006a: 153–156). That symmetry took precedence over functionality is manifested most powerfully in pleasure pavilions which seem to have been set into the Indian landscape as formal statements of Mughal order, rather than edifices for providing comfort and recreation.

The Mughal solutions might have had, in turn, an effect on Central Asia that provided their original inspiration. The symmetrical plan of the Shaybanid *khanaqah* of Qasim Shaykh at Karminah/Kermin (1579?) in Central Asia, probably built a couple of years after Humayun's tomb, invites this line of thought. Or else, commonly shared prototypes may have generated similar forms. Geometrical planning which perfects and elaborates Timurid ideas is found in practically all Mughal building types.

An especially noteworthy Timurid reference is made in the main *zanana* (harem) building of Akbar's palace fort in Agra, called misleadingly "Jahangiri Mahal" (late 1560s to 1570s). This typical example of the creative adaptation of Timurid prototypes and the wide range of the architectural synthesis fostered by Akbar features a ground plan echoing that of the aforementioned funerary shrine complex Timur built for Ahmad Yasavi in Turkestan (1397–1399) (cf. Koch 1991: fig 36 no. 4 with our Figure 32.3). But in the Agra palace, this plan type is combined with the elevation of an open courtyard. The inner courtyard taking the place of the central domed chamber of the model is in the regional sandstone style of the Gujarat-Malwa Rajasthan tradition of western and central India, whereas the western façade quotes the red sandstone facing highlighted with white marble of Delhi. The composite plan exhibits a characteristic Mughal symmetry (the present irregularities on the northern side are due to later changes). In contrast, the vaults are less symmetrical, perhaps to enliven the concept with controlled variety. The Jahangiri Mahal not only adaptively reinterprets the plan of a Timurid masonry structure; its riverfront verandah quotes from another imported tradition: the high slender columns and their inserted pot-like element are a translation into stone of the timber iwan of the vernacular building traditions that existed in Central Asia throughout the centuries, complemented by the monumental masonry constructions of representational architecture (Koch 1991: figs 14, 39). As we shall see below, this column type, further transformed under Shah Jahan, was to have a great career in later Indian architecture.

The Mughals also reinterpreted the Timurid madrasa, but while it had been a major building type in Timurid architecture only two examples of their patronage have survived in India. The first one dating from the early period is the Khayr al-Manazil, built in 1561–1562 by Akbar's wet-nurse Maham Anaga opposite the Purana Qil'a in an area which was then Mughal Delhi. It fuses a Timurid madrasa of the two-iwan plan (such as the madrasa of Muhammad Sultan in the aforementioned Gur-i Amir tomb complex in Samarqand) with the characteristic single-aisled mosque type of the Delhi Sultanate (Koch 1991: fig. 57). Similarly, the later madrasa of Ghazi al-Din Khan of *c.* 1700 combines the same mosque type with a symmetrical four-iwan plan (Koch 2006b: fig. 1.2). Comparable to the Shaybanid madrasa of ʿAbd Allah Khan at Bukhara (1589–1590), it has an entrance block which integrates a partial *hasht-bihisht* plan. The patron of this madrasa was Mir Shihab al-Din, who came from Bukhara in the 1670s to seek his fortunes in Hindustan. His origin and the lack of a Mughal madrasa tradition seems to have motivated him to adopt the post-Timurid forms of Uzbek Bukhara.

Overarching Space

Timurid arch-netting became a common feature of Mughal transition zones and almost entirely replaced the older squinch system employed in the Delhi Sultanate. Prior to its deployment by the Mughals, we find it in Deccani architecture which had established Timurid contacts on its own. The Mughals also adapted the Timurid four-arch vault system which projected the nine-part *hasht-bihisht* layout onto vaults. We find a dome resting on four intersecting arches creating partial vaults in brick masonry, covered by polished stucco with geometric ornament in the great *hammam* of Fatehpur Sikri (1571–1585). Translations into sandstone appear in the so-called Barber's tomb within the garden of Humayun's tomb (1590–1591) (Figure 32.6) and in the giant sandstone vault of the Govind Deva temple, built in 1590 by Akbar's vassal, the Kachhwaha Rajput Man Singh at Govardhan, north of Agra (cf. Figure 32.5 with Koch 1991: 50–51, figs. 32, 33, 67). That the most daring transformation of a Timurid vault appears in a temple sheds significant light on the architectural open-mindedness of Mughal India in the sixteenth century and contradicts the still popular polarizing equation of "Hindu" architecture with "trabeate" and "Muslim" architecture with "arcuate" construction (Tillotson 1990: 24–25, 108, 118 et passim).

Minarets

A renewed interest in Timurid architecture under Jahangir and Shah Jahan could also explain the introduction of minarets, so far not found in Mughal architecture. Examples include the use of four minarets on the roof of the south gate in Akbar's tomb at Sikandra (1613), the four corner minarets of Jahangir's tomb at Lahore (1628–1638), and another four around the mausoleum of the Taj Mahal and the tomb of Rabiʿa Daurani at Aurangabad (1660–1661) (Figure 32.9 and Koch 1991: figs 68, 106, pls. XVII, XVIII). Earlier, quadruple minarets had also been used in the Deccan: the Charminar in Hyderabad (1591), which was copied in the "Charminar" of Bukhara in 1807 (Yaralova 1969: 333). One cannot exclude a reference to the quadruple minarets of Ottoman mosques, the earliest example being the Üç Serefeli mosque in Edirne (1437–1447), which itself may have drawn inspiration from Timurid models, judging by its Persianate decorative program in the "international Timurid" style (see Yürekli, CHAPTER 29).

Architectural Ornament

In the fusion of disparate traditions from which Mughal architecture was created, Timurid ornament remained a source of inspiration well into the seventeenth century, ranging from direct quotations to translations and adaptations in other materials. Geometric Timurid tile mosaic appears on early to mid-sixteenth-century Mughal tombs such as the Sabz Burj and Nila Gunbad at Delhi, on the *chhatri* cupolas of Humayun's tomb mentioned above, in the tomb of Akbar's *wakil* Atga Khan at Nizamuddin in Delhi (1566–1567), at the *chhatri*s of Akbar's tomb (completed 1613) in Sikandra (Smith 1909/1994: pls XX–XXIV), and in the new floral patterns favored by Shah Jahan on the outer walls of the tomb of his *diwan-i kul* (finance minister) Afzal Khan Shirazi, known as "Chini ka Rawza,"

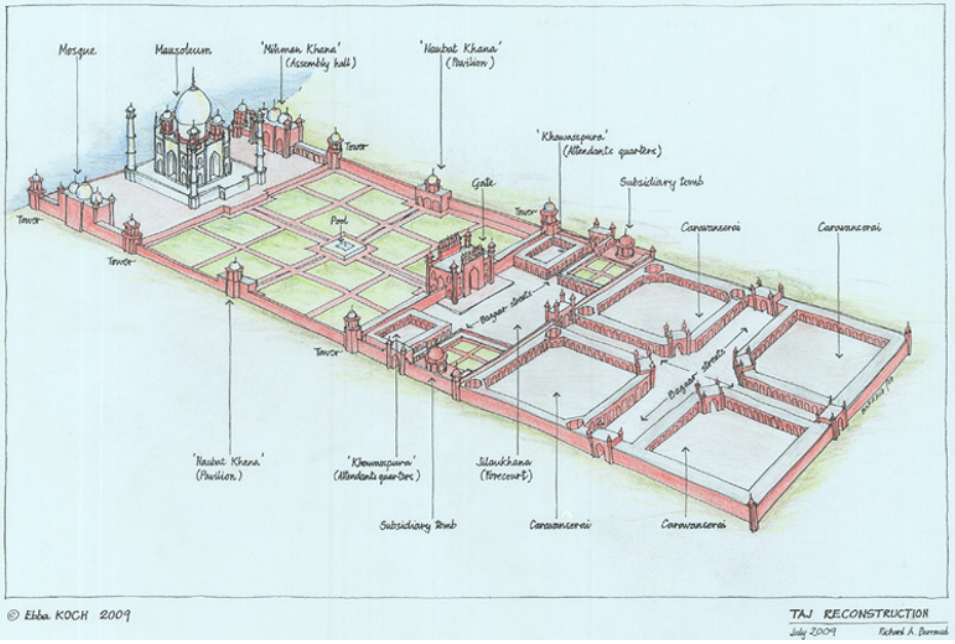
Mosque
Mausoleum
'Mihman Khana' (Assembly hall)
'Naubat Khana' (Pavilion)
'Khawasspura' (Attendants quarters)
Subsidiary tomb
Tower
Tower
Tower
Tower
Tower
Gate
Pool
Caravanserai
Caravanserai
Bazaar streets
Bazaar streets
'Naubat Khana' (Pavilion)
'Khawasspura' (Attendants quarters)
Jilaukhana (Forecourt)
Subsidiary tomb
Caravanserai
Caravanserai
© Ebba KOCH 2009
TAJ RECONSTRUCTION
July 2009
Richard A. Barraud

FIGURE 32.9 Reconstruction of the entire Taj Mahal complex with its now lost bazaar and caravanserai complex in the south, length 896 m, width 300.84 m. Source: Drawing R.A. Barraud and © Ebba Koch.

in Agra (*c.* 1639) (Smith 1901: pls. XIX–XLIV). While tile facing occurs only sparingly in the Mughal mainstream architecture of Agra and Delhi, it is a distinctive regional practice at Lahore which was far from the sandstone and marble quarries of Hindustan. Jahangir made spectacular use of tile mosaic in the facing of the outer wall of the Lahore fort which shows a Solomonic program of courtly scenes, angels, demons, beasts, and birds (Koch 1983; Vogel 1920). Translations of geometric tile patterns into stone intarsia and mosaic are more frequent and make their most spectacular appearance in the southern gate and the *pishtaq*s of Akbar's tomb at Sikandra (Smith 1909/1994: pls. XXVI–XXX, XL–XLVIII). This tomb is altogether a compendium of early seventeenth-century Mughal ornament in which Timurid decorative forms feature strongly, not only in the translation of geometric tile mosaic patterns into stone intarsia but also in the medium of painted plaster decoration, recalling Timurid *kundal* work in the vestibule (Koch 1991: pl. VII). Stone carving, on the other hand, takes up Timurid relief patterns of the "distinctive *haft qalam* (seven scripts) idiom of the late fifteenth century," featuring "large blossoms and sharp jagged petals in tightly coiled chinoiserie arabesques that were deemed suitable for wooden doors … as well as for tomb stones" (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 208–211; cf. O'Kane 1987: 341–342, fig. 54.3). This type of relief appears in Mughalized patterns on Akbar's carved marble cenotaph and on the pedestal next to it (Smith 1909/1994: pls. XV-XVIII), as well as the spandrels of the gates and false gates of Akbar's tomb in sandstone and stone intarsia (Smith 1909/1994: pls. XXVI, XXXIX, XLIX-LII, LIV, LVI, LVII). Under Shah Jahan, Timurid decorative forms were explored anew, in such examples as the lining of arches with rope molding in the Taj Mahal (Koch 2006a: fig. 223), the Aramgah (1637), and the Moti Masjid (1653), both of them in the Agra fort.

The Baluster Column

The longest lasting impact of Central Asia on Mughal architecture came, however, from vernacular architecture, from the wooden baluster columns of a characteristic, elongated shape forming a bulb at their base. Such wooden columns provided one of the inspirations for a type of Mughal column which had a complex genesis and was to become the dominant columnar form of later Mughal architecture and its regional derivates. This was the baluster column of Shah Jahani architecture, a column emerging from a pot with overflowing leaves and forming a bulb at the base of its tapering shaft, with a capital composed of leaves (Koch 1982, 2001).

Already before Shah Jahan, Mughal architects had turned their attention to baluster-shaped columnar forms, but they had refrained from fully accepting the characteristic baluster shape. The wooden baluster columns of Central Asian porches called iwans had inspired the stone columns of Akbari architecture, as we have seen above in the east verandah of the Jahangiri Mahal. Other splendid examples form the colonnade surrounding the Rani ki Mahal of the Allahabad fort, dated 1583 (Koch 1991: fig. 53). The elongated shaft of these early Mughal versions is not tapering but straight and a pot-like element is inserted at its bottom instead of the characteristic bulb. Such forms also appear among some of the wooden Central Asian examples, which altogether show a great variety in the relationship between the tapering shaft forming a bulb and an inserted pot-like element. The majority express the bulb as a stylized pot with overflowing leaves; the pot here is compressed into the bulb, so to speak. A whole range of variants of this columnar type is found in the Jamiʿ Masjid of Khiva, dating from the early middle ages to the modern period (Yaralova 1969: figs. 31, 32, 33; Figure 32.10). The column type goes back to ancient Sogdian times and seems to be an adaption of baluster columns and/or columns emerging from pots with overflowing leaves, the *purna ghata* or *purna kalasha*: the old vase of plenty of Indian architecture, which could have been transmitted to Central Asia through the Kushan Empire. Elongated columns with a tapering shaft, forming a bulb at their foot, with a globe/pot-like element inserted between the shaft and the base are found in ancient residential architecture, for instance, at Jumalak -tepe north of Tirmiz (fifth to sixth century) (Chmelnizkij 1989: fig. 47), at the two half columns framing the altar niche

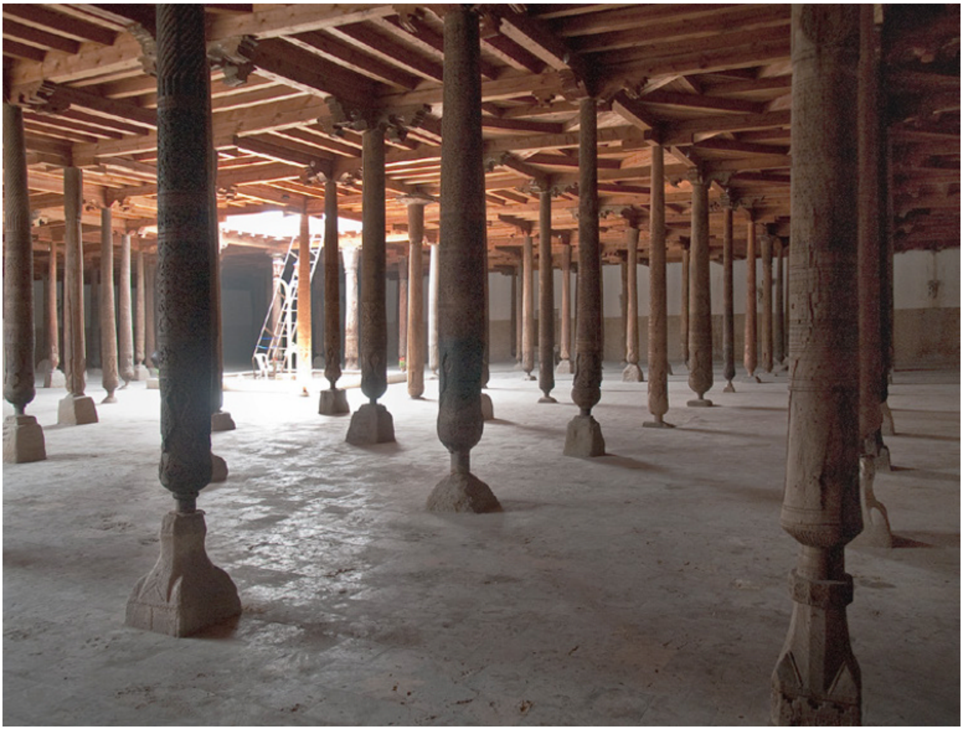

FIGURE 32.10 Jamiʿ Masjid, Khiva, Uzbekistan, reconstructed in the eighteenth century with wooden columns dating from different periods reaching back to the ninth century and earlier. Source: Photograph by Britta Elsner, 2010. Reproduced with permission.

of Gardani Khisor east of Samarqand (sixth to seventh century, Chmelnizkij 1989: fig 76), and at the throne hall of the palace of Bunjikat (sixth to seventh century, Chmelzniskij 1989: fig. 80; see also Yaralova 1969, 188, figs 6, 7; 194, figs 15, 16). An early Islamic adaptation would be the engaged corner colonettes framing the squinches of the tenth-century mausoleum of the Samanids in Bukhara (Yaralova 1969: 214, fig. 14).

The actual shape of Shah Jahan's baluster column, with its revolutionary naturalistic acanthus decoration taking the third dimension into full account, was derived from European sources, most likely prints of the Dürer circle brought to the Mughal court by the Jesuits (Koch 1982, 2001).

The Central Asian column has been revived in the architecture of post-Soviet Uzbekistan as a symbol of Uzbek national identity. It features significantly in the colonnade surrounding the Museum of Timur at Tashkent, built in 1996 to celebrate Timur's 660th birthday. Timur has become the new hero and identification figure of Uzbekistan, where the objects of his museum, glorifying his life and deeds, even include a model of the Taj Mahal.

Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that geometry, symmetry, and rational planning represent the principal link between Timurid and Mughal architecture. This relationship is highly dynamic and confronts us with the rather unfashionable notion of diachronic development over longer time periods and in a wider regional frame. The Timurids had a more pronounced interest in geometry than the Seljuqs and Ikhanids (Golombek 1981: 44), an interest that manifested itself progressively in an increasing number of building types. The Mughals built on the geometrical groundwork of the Timurids but, aiming at even stricter functional planning and perfect symmetry, they systematized ideas that had been more informally expressed in Timurid architecture. This Mughal adaptive process reinforces the principle of organization and binds the elements of Timurid models into a more symmetrical composition. This is especially true of coherently organized elevations which reflect every element of the ground plan. The Mughals elaborated Timurid solutions by merging them with the other traditions – Indian, Iranian, and European – which informed their style. They extended their geometric approach to all building types and to the planning of ever larger complexes.

In the seventeenth century, the Mughal obsession with symmetrical correspondence found new forms of expression under Shah Jahan in a shift in emphasis from radially to bilaterally symmetrical schemes. In the enormous complex of the Taj Mahal, the Timurid-derived central plan of the *hasht-bihisht* for the mausoleum proper and for its oblong variant in the gate were subjected to an overall mirror symmetry on both sides of a central axis (on which are placed the main features), an arrangement which the Mughals called *qarina*, an Arabic term meaning companion or counter-image (Figure 32.9). Bilateral symmetry dominated by a central axis has generally been recognized as an ordering principle of the architecture of rulers aspiring toward absolute power, an expression of authoritative rule that brings about balance and harmony (Koch 2006a: 105). Architecture reflected the political structure of the Mughal Empire, where power was never as focused as it became in the reign of Shah Jahan. The rationality of planning was counterbalanced in his reign by the sensual aesthetic of decorative surfaces with relief in stone and stucco and inlay work.

The above discussion lays out the "buffet" of monuments that could have influenced Mughal architecture, whether because they were associated with their ancestor Timur, or because Mughal architecture was, in some way, a direct continuation of the Timurid tradition. For the artists and craftsmen arriving from Iran and Central Asia, the borders of the Mughal Empire were highly permeable. Among the many examples, albeit lesser known, is the artist who painted the vaults of the so-called Zarnigar-khanah (Gilded Pavilion) adjoining the shrine at Gazurgah in Afghanistan (Golombek and Wilber 1988, vol. 2, col. pl. X). He may well have been responsible for the paintings commissioned by Jahangir for the vestibule of the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra (Koch 1991: pl. VII). If not the movement of craftsmen themselves, then access to the *aides-memoires* of the architects, such as drawings on paper, might have served as vehicles for the transmission of specific ideas, particularly ornament (Necipoğlu 1995). What the Mughals saw in Timurid and Uzbek architecture, they liked and further developed. In some cases, the link was more tangible. We have seen that Babur admired the Timurid gardens of Herat and his son and successor Humayun had a barge designed to emulate the *hasht-bihisht* plan. Later on, at least one architect from Uzbek Bukhara, himself steeped in the late Timurid aesthetics of Herat, built the mausoleum of Humayun in Delhi (Figure 32.6 and Figure 32.7). While Babur stood closer in time to the Timurids, it was under Shah Jahan that a renewed calling forth of "the Timurid spirit" (Golombek 1991) seems to have become an avocation. In promoting the incorporation of clearly identifiable Timurid features into their own architectural production, the Mughals felt that they could acquire some of the mystique that had enveloped the mythologized figure of Timur. They thereby actualized an Arabic saying that is often cited in the Timurid chronicles: "If you want to know about us, look at our works (*al-athar*)"

Notes

1 See CHAPTER 25, Part 2 by Masuya and CHAPTER 26 by Roxburgh.
2 The original photographs reside in Shiraz at the final home of A.U. Pope, but copies were made in 1964 and are accessible through the University of Michigan, Department of the History of Art.
3 Most of the significant passages have been translated by W.M. Thackston (1989).
4 See O'Kane, CHAPTER 23.
5 On the Tughluqs see O'Kane, CHAPTER 23.

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33

Istanbul, Isfahan, and Delhi: Imperial Designs and Urban Experiences in the Early Modern Era

Sussan Babaie and Çiğdem Kafescioğlu

The urban refashionings of Istanbul, Isfahan, and Delhi, in the Ottoman (*c.* 1300–1923), Safavid (1501–1722), and Mughal (1526–1857) empires between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries were timed to be productive of new sociopolitical and economic configurations. Despite their embodiment of comparable paradigms, these imperial capital cities present different historical trajectories; Istanbul began its transformation in the mid-fifteenth century, following the conquest of Byzantine Constantinople, while Isfahan and Delhi assumed this new urban identity in the early seventeenth century. Their different historical courses notwithstanding, they were all understood within contemporary theories of rulership in each empire as the primary locus, generative, and representative of power at a time of territorial consolidation and centralizing predilections. This chapter follows themes in the making of the three capital cities. Exploring the meanings attributed to these imperial seats, we trace practices of social and courtly life as they shaped and were shaped by urban configurations. We suggest that changes in the articulation and restructuring of political authority and the emergence of new elites and urban groups continuously generated new formations of social and political networks that facilitate our understanding of an early modern urbanity.

Ceremonial choreographies between court and city and modalities of communication linking ruler, elites, and denizens represented the structures of power within each polity. As solid and impermeable as the rulership in each case may

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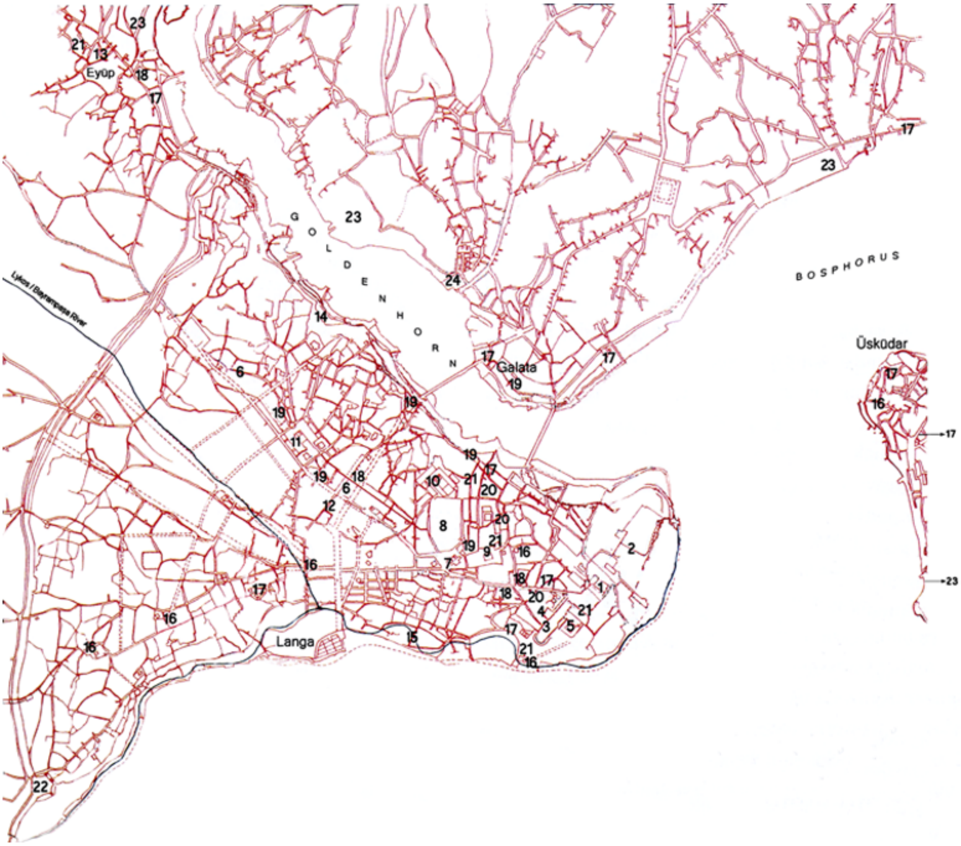
appear, contemporary narratives allow us to account for a textured fabric of life involving varied modes of social mobility and participation. In all three cities, the presence of the court, with its royal and elite households, multitudes of military forces, and palace services accounted at least in part for the expansive populations, spaces, and projects. While urbanization and settlement campaigns were initiated by imperial order, it is equally important to take account of the elites and the denizens for their share in power, their participation in the creation of each capital city and in state building (Map 33.1, Map 33.2, Map 33.3).

City Portraits *c.* 1650

Around 1650, each city had in place an urban armature of monuments, public spaces, and axes of mobility constituting a choreography of visual and spatial relationships that continued to inform subsequent developments into the modern era. Already the Ottoman capital city for 200 years, Istanbul (referred to in official terminology as Kostantiniyye, that is, Constantinople) had acquired a monumental form with its royal palaces and mosque complexes that responded to the city's Byzantine legacy and to the peninsula's hilly topography. In its residential neighborhoods, ports, and marketplaces, the walled city and its suburbs housed one of the largest and most diverse urban populations of the early modern world. In addition to the ethnic diversity of its Muslim population, the city housed the patriarchates of the large Greek Orthodox and Armenian communities, a Jewish Rabbinate, and Latin Christian churches. Its vistas presented not only the imprint of the foundational moment under Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481), and the ambitious urban posture of an imperial world capital during the age of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–1566), but also the inscription onto the cityscape of new reconfigurations at the turn of the seventeenth century.

Initiated by imperial decree late in the sixteenth century, Isfahan of *c.* 1650 had settled into a new urban configuration generated out of the medieval Seljuq city. Parks and promenades introduced new vistas altering the topography of Isfahan along and around freshly configured urban nodes, imperial monuments – markets, mosques, palaces, plazas – as well as residential neighborhoods. Urbanites – composed of nobility, merchant communities transplanted from Tabriz, Julfa, and from India, converts of Georgian, Armenian, and Circassian origin who constituted new court elites – were incorporated into the refashioned imperial and social structures of the Safavid polity, becoming active builders of neighborhoods and monuments.

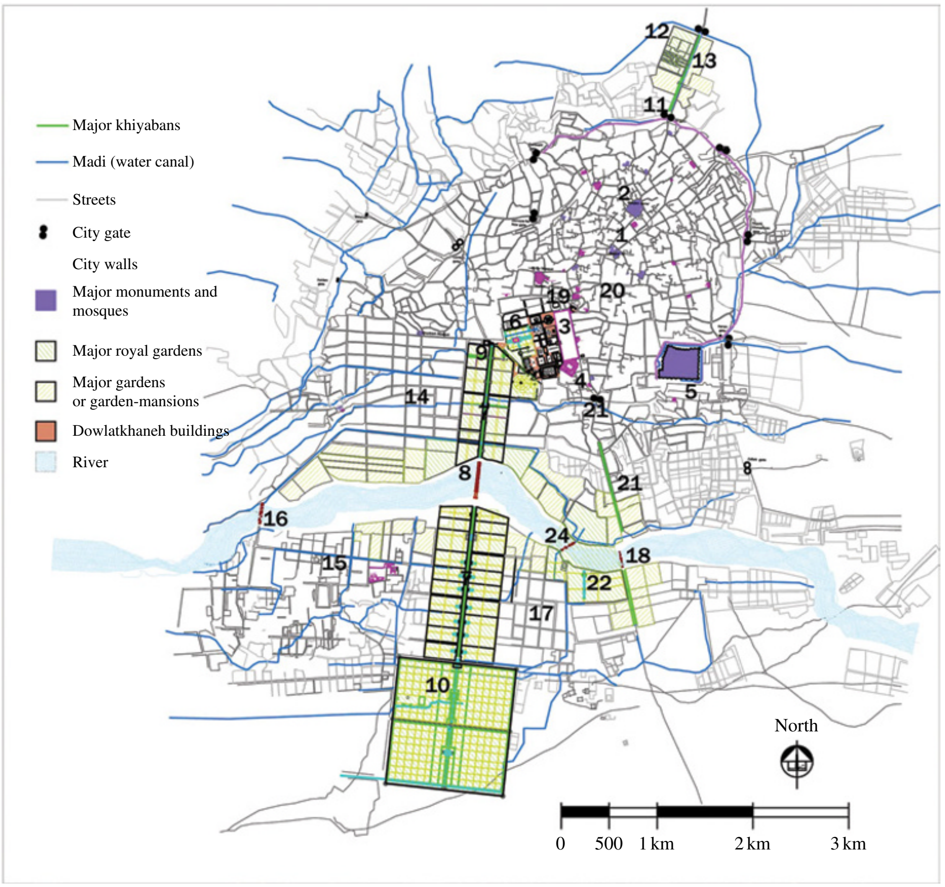
Superseding earlier capital cities in Delhi and partly overlapping scattered settlements, Shahjahanabad (Abode of Shah Jahan, founded in 1639) was built along two major nodal points: the Fort by the Yamuna River, and two arterial spines lined with marketplaces that connected the Fort to the city gates. Elite mansions and gardens, residential quarters, mosques, and temples filled the quarters. The urban topography of Shahjahanabad was dominated by the visual



Map 33.1 Istanbul, map with main landmarks in the mid-seventeenth century. 1. Hagia Sophia; 2. Topkapı Palace; 3. Hippodrome/Atmeydanı; 4. Ibrahim Pasha Palace; 5. Ahmed I mosque complex; 6. Divan Yolu; 7. Bayezid II mosque complex; 8. The Old Palace; 9. Bedestan; 10. Süleymaniye mosque complex; 11. Mehmed II mosque complex; 12. Janissary barracks and Etmeydanı; 13. Ayyub al-Ansari complex; 14. Greek Orthodox Patriarchate; 15. Armenian Patriarchate; 16. Mosque-convent complex; 17. Mosque complex; 18. Madrasa and mausoleum complex; 19. Markets; 20. Caravanserai; 21. Public bath; 22. Yedikule citadel; 23. Royal palace or palatial garden; 24. Arsenal. Source: Adapted from Müller Wiener 1977: 32.

dialogue between the imposing Fort and the elevated Friday mosque (completed 1656), which is still the Congregational Mosque of Delhi. As in Istanbul and Isfahan, Delhi was populated by heterogeneous communities and an elite that was even more diverse, owing to its majority Hindu population.

Each city embodied a moment of foundation, and the cumulative layering of successive campaigns of urban development, mapping out new political and


Major khiyabans
Madi (water canal)
Streets
City gate
City walls
Major monuments and mosques
Major royal gardens
Major gardens or garden-mansions
Dowlatkhaneh buildings
River
North
0
500
1 km
2 km
3 km
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
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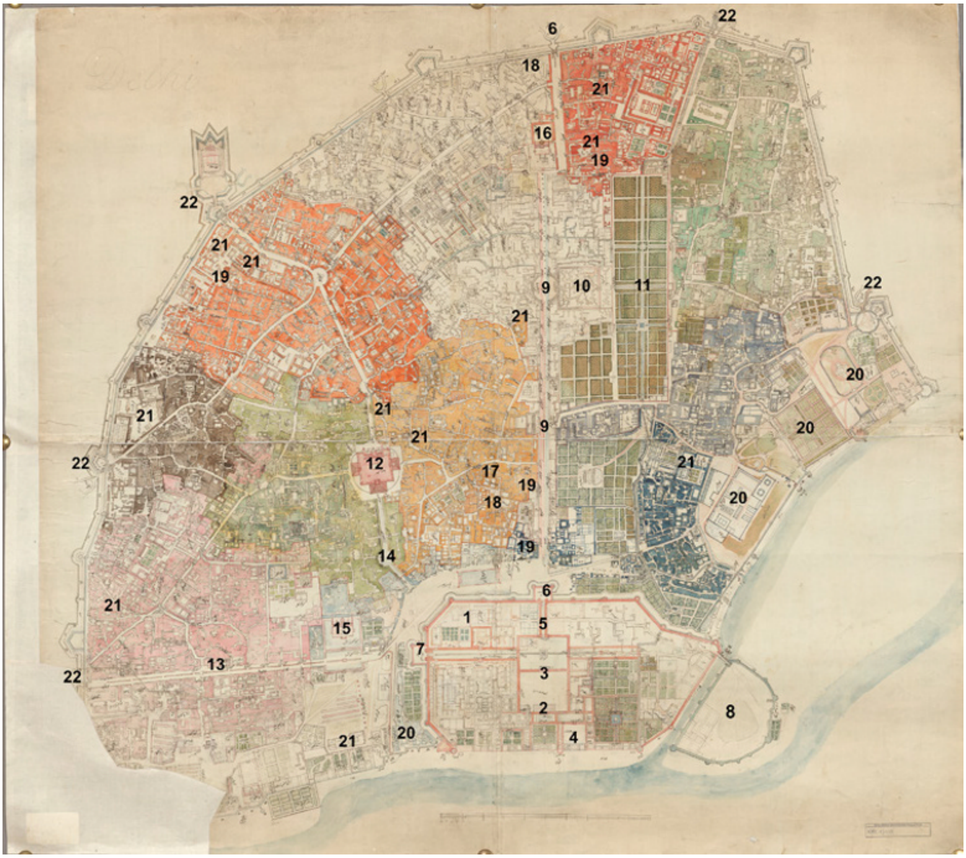
1- Old Square (Meydan- Konneh)
2- Masjed-e Jameʿ (Jameʿ Mosque)
3- Meydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan
4- Royal Mosque (Masjed-e Shah)
5- Tabarak Fortress (Qalʾeh-ye Tabarak)
6- Dowlatkhaneh-ye Naqsh-e Jahan
7- Khiyaban-e Chahar Bagh
8- Allah Verdi Khan Bridge
9- ʿEmarat-e Jahan Nama and Dowlat gate near it
10- Hezar Jarib garden
11- Toqchi gate
12- Qushkhaneh garden
13- Khiyaban-e Toqchi
(or Khiyaban-e Bagh-e Qushkhaneh)
14- ʿAbbasabad
15- New Julfa district
16- Marnan Bridge
17- Saʾadatabad district
18- Hasanabad Bridge
19- Bazaar gate
20- Meydan-e Mir (Mir Square)
21- Hasanabad gate
22- Saʾadatabad royal garden
23- Khiyaban-e Khaju
24- Juyi Bridge

Map 33.2 Isfahan, map with main landmarks of Safavid Isfahan. Source: Drawn by M.S.A. Emrani. Reproduced with permission.



Map 33.3 Map of Shahjahanabad, *c.* 1850. 1. Red Fort; 2. Diwan-i ʿAmm; 3. Naqqarakhana; 4. Diwan-i Khass; 5. Urdu bazaar; 6. Lahori gate; 7. Akbarabadi gate; 8. Salimgarh; 9. Chandni Chawk; 10. Caravanserai of Jahanara; 11. Jahanara (Sahibabad) Gardens; 12. Jamaʿ Masjid; 13. Faiz bazaar; 14. Khass bazaar; 15. Akbarabadi Masjid; 16. Fatehpuri Masjid and caravanserai; 17. Chawk; 18. Mosque; 19. Temple; 20. Royal Garden; 21. Haveli; 22. City gate. Source: Ehlers and Krafft 2003: 10.

religious configurations. While Sunni (Hanafi) Ottoman, Twelver Shiʿi Safavid, and Sunni (Hanafi) Mughal official dynastic religious identities predominated, doctrines and practices were neither frozen in time nor the products of a single moment. They need to be considered in view of the subtle negotiations within each empire, and the larger dynamics of confessionalization in the early modern world. In the Ottoman case, the underlying narratives of an apocalyptic moment coinciding with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and the gradual concretization of a shariʿa-minded Sunni legal frame overlapped with notions of sultanic hegemony. The Safavid articulation of Imami Twelver Shiʿism – belief in the way of the 12 Imams – aligned the expectation of the return of Mahdi (messiah) with the rebirth of kingship in an Iranian garb. The redefinition of a predominantly Sunni identity by Shah Jahan (r. 1627–1658) embraced diverse notions of kingship including the Qurʾanic Solomonic rule, and a claim to Achaemenid and Hindu pasts.

In each city, contemporary narrators writing for the court captured and emphatically connected the foundational moment to the personal involvement of the ruler. The plans of Shahjahanabad and its fortified palace were presented to and approved by Shah Jahan (Blake 1991: 30). Similarly Shah ʿAbbas I "would engage his mind in planning and building" Isfahan (Iskandar Beg in McChesney 1988: 110). According to the historian Tursun, "an inclination became manifest in [Mehmed II's] soul that he should make [Constantinople] the seat of his throne, and that he should make this joy-giving site the possessor of the laws of kingship and fortune" (Tursun 1978: 66–67). Beyond the narrative of the ruler's personal passion, there is evidence of the pragmatics of the building of new capitals informed by notions of shared obligations and responsibilities among newly constituted elites. Contemporary histories of each city thus record the distribution of property among the high-ranking members of the ruling body who were tasked with integrating their projects into the master plan of the capital.

An equally important dimension of state building and centralization was the consolidation of economic sources and resources, the creation of infrastructure, and the relocation of communities. These measures facilitated the concentration of wealth in the imperial domains and the rerouting of Eurasian transit trade in favor of the new capital cities, especially in the cases of Istanbul and Isfahan. The flow of riches may not have been equally distributed, but the forcibly transplanted merchants, artisanal and farming collectives had roles in the enrichment of the capital cities (Dale 2010). As the richest among the three empires, benefiting from the immense material wealth and agrarian abundance of the South Asian continent, the Mughals also depended on the old land-bound trade routes. Moreover they cultivated their relationship with vassal Hindu principalities to the south and the European-held coastal lands, which had come to dominate maritime trade in the Indian Ocean.

Populations and Neighborhoods

The three capitals were urban giants according to early modern standards. The urban populations' micro stories of ethno-religious compositions, distributions, and architectural interventions represent the parallel workings of organic growth and the masterminded planning of centralizing administrations.

In Isfahan, Muslim, Jewish and Zoroastrian families made up the old native communities. Population distribution in its residential quarters (*mahalle*) preserved older settlement patterns and introduced new ones. In the seventeenth century, Isfahan grew disproportionately larger than any other city in the empire (Haneda 1996). Its population appears to have grown to 200 000 in the 1620s during its initial expansion with transplanted merchant communities settled in new quarters, as well as resident Indian and European commercial and missionary interests. Armenians are estimated to have numbered about 6000 families, perhaps an exaggeration, in the neighborhood of New Julfa on the southwestern side of the Zayanda River (Baghdiantz-MacCabe 2005). Merchant families transplanted from Tabriz in northwestern Iran were settled on the northwestern side of the river in ʿAbbasabad, named after Shah ʿAbbas I (r. 1588–1629), who ordered their deportation and on whose orders this quarter was constructed. It was purpose built on a housing-project scheme with all the amenities of a full-fledged city.

Ottoman Istanbul rapidly grew after its foundational period, when it was settled largely through forced deportations of Greek, Armenian, Jewish, and Muslim subjects from newly conquered territories, housing also the sultans' janissary forces who were converted from Christianity to Islam. By the late sixteenth century, about 300 000 inhabited the walled peninsula, Istanbul proper, approximating a total of 500 000 with its sprawling suburbs along the Golden Horn and Bosphorus shores. Throughout Istanbul's Ottoman history, Muslims constituted approximately half of the denizens; with Greek Orthodox, Armenian Gregorian, and Jewish communities forming large groups, alongside smaller Italian, Roma (Gypsy), and other communities (Inalcık 1978). Ottoman officials used the legal framework of the neighborhood (*mahalle*) to register, order, and control the city's residential areas, subsuming these under larger districts (*nahiye*). The cellular homogeneity assumed in scholarship of residential quarters of the walled city and its three townships (Galata, Üsküdar, and Eyüp), centered on places of worship for diverse ethno-religious communities, was never an absolute in Istanbul's history. At particular conjunctures, corresponding to trends towards Sunnitization, the central government imposed, not always successfully, spatial and visual markers of confessional distinction and hierarchy (Kafescioğlu 2008: 274–281).

The population of Delhi is estimated around 375 000 inhabitants in the mid-seventeenth century. Hindus and Muslims were the two largest confessional groups in Delhi's cosmopolitan population, which included Jains, Muslims and Armenians of Iran, Kashmiris, Khattris, and Punjabis (Mitra Chenoy 1998: 143 ff.). As in Istanbul and Isfahan, Delhi's caste, religion, and ethnicity-based settlements were not exclusive. Muslims inhabited the heavily Khattri, Kashmiri, and Jain areas, while Hindus had temples in the Muslim and Jain neighborhoods (Asher 1999: 111; Mitra Chenoy 1998: 155). Marketplaces (*katra*), lanes occupied by a particular group (*kucha*), neighborhoods (*mahalle*), and mansions (*haveli*) of noblemen, traders, and merchants formed the residential fabric and the toponymy of Delhi, often referring to the mercantile or craft activities in particular locations, or to inhabitants of a certain street.

Configuring Capital Cities and the Politics of Space

Istanbul

"He is emperor who by right possesses the center of the Empire, and the center of the Roman Empire is Constantinople," wrote George of Trebizond to Mehmed II following the momentous event of 1453, the fall, or the conquest of the city (cited in Babinger 1978: 249). Notwithstanding the initially contested transference of the royal seat, Istanbul, after the twin capitals Bursa in Anatolia (1326–1365) and Edirne in Europe (1365–1453), became the third and final Ottoman capital uniting both continents until the demise of the empire in 1923. The frontier polity, where the sultan was *primus inter pares* among largely autonomous warriors and a mostly Muslim-born land-holding elite of learned backgrounds, would now be replaced by a new military-administrative elite of slave background, who participated in the creation of a centralizing political apparatus (Kafadar 1994). An urban program, a collective enterprise on the part of the ruling body reshaped the city, created and communicated the image of an Ottoman Constantinople. This process involved the introduction of new institutional, visual, and spatial configurations, transforming the spaces and meanings of the millennial imperial city.

Unlike Safavid Isfahan and Mughal Shahjahanabad, which were created as grandly conceived and laid out new cities adjacent to (and only partially overlapping with) earlier urban foundations, Ottoman Istanbul occupied the very site of Byzantine Constantinople. Throughout the period covered in this chapter, many projects involved a varied set of appropriations, rejections, reuses of, and dialogues with the multilayered fabric and the macro form of the Byzantine city. The triangular peninsula surrounded by the waters of the Propontis (Marmara Sea), the Bosphorus, and the Golden Horn, and lined by a ridge marked by hilltops, was in Byzantine times traversed by the Mese avenue. This east–west artery, forking midway, was punctured by fora with central monumental victory columns. That processional route (a Roman urban armature in part abandoned in the late medieval era) connected the city center to the ceremonial gate of entry at the southwest, the Golden Gate. Palatial and monastic establishments were dispersed in the urban enclosure. The Church of Hagia Sophia (completed 562), the city's primary monument, anchored both urban façades at the eastern end of the peninsula.

Ottoman interventions to the Constantinopolitan cityscape engaged the late antique and medieval legacies of Byzantium: royal projects revived the central triad of Hagia Sophia, Great Palace, and Hippodrome, the interconnected loci of faith, rule, and urban ceremonial, through the conversion of the Hagia Sophia into the city's primary imperial mosque. This was accompanied by the construction of a new palace, the Topkapı at the tip of the peninsula, and the gradual appropriation of the Hippodrome, in its Turkish translation the Atmeydanı, into the main public and ceremonial urban space, linked to the former two

(Necipoğlu 1991, 2012). The processional route, the Byzantine Mese would be used, expanded, and transformed into the Ottoman Divanyolu (literally, road of the imperial council) through the construction on and near it of Ottoman landmarks and sites of ceremonial and ritual. A set of royal and elite foundations located on the ancient fora would reshape the late Roman urban armature in an Ottoman idiom (Cerasi 2005). Trading infrastructure along the Golden Horn, formerly Byzantine and Italian, expanded uphill; it was now centered by a multi-domed market hall (*bedestan*) and surrounded by specialized market streets, following an earlier Ottoman scheme. A set of public bathhouses with monumental scales and central locations, a neo-Roman venture drawing on ancient and medieval Mediterranean practice, was connected to the restoration of the city's ancient water distribution system. Patrons focused mostly on the already more densely settled northern sections of the peninsula (Kafescioğlu 2009: 28–44, 103–109).

A tomb and mosque complex outside the Theodosian walls on the shores of the Golden Horn constituted an act of memorialization. It marked the alleged grave of the Arab martyr Ayyub al-Ansari (Eyüp in Turkish), a companion of the Prophet believed to have been present in the first Arab siege of Constantinople in the seventh century: a link between the Ottoman order and an imagined early Islamic presence at the edge of the city. The shrine at Eyüp would become a place of internal pilgrimage for Istanbulites, and a major node on the ceremonial map of the imperial capital, as a girding ritual here became part of Ottoman accession rituals towards the end of the 1500s (Necipoğlu 2005: 33–44, 111; Yerasimos 1990: 164–174, 202–214).

Conceptualized by Mehmed II to represent newly formulated notions of absolute authority and to house its ruling body, the Topkapı Palace successfully adapted to evolutions in Ottoman notions of rule through the following centuries. Within its tightly organized spaces, ceremonial was orchestrated to center on the secluded and often invisible monarch, who delegated authority to an expanding body of subordinates, while remaining at the apogee of power (Necipoğlu 1991). A complex of three consecutive courtyards ranging from semi-public to private, and surrounding gardens, the Topkapı was enclosed within walls that encompassed the entire promontory at the tip of the peninsula. The medieval idea of a palace-fort shaped its relationship to the city, a notion maintained in visual and symbolic terms, in the palace's literal and figurative isolation affected by the fortified enclosure wall, rather than by any military function. This aspect of the Ottoman palace becomes clearly manifest in a comparison between the Topkapı and Shahjahanabad's veritable military stronghold of the Red Fort in Delhi.

Spatial isolation was complemented and counterpoised by the visual links established between focal points of the palace and the city. Its belvedere towers, terraces, and loggias offered views of Istanbul and its suburbs, the seas, and the lands beyond, simultaneously inviting gazes from those vistas. Topkapı's interior configurations were novel. Replacing the loose spatial arrangement of earlier Ottoman palaces with multifunctional buildings, this New Palace (*Saray-ı Cedid*) featured a set of newly designed structures housing differentiated functions. They included service and storage sections and workshops of artists and craftsmen, spaces allocated to the imperial administration and its bureaucracy, and the private quarters of the palace. The latter housed dormitories of slave pages who attended on the monarch as future members of the military-administrative elite to be inducted into service upon the completion of their palace education, and the harem quarters whose future expansions paralleled changing roles of women within dynastic politics.

Complementing the Topkapı was Mehmed II's mosque complex atop the peninsula's fourth hill, embodying and manifesting the changing politics of religion and religious hierarchy, redefining the state's relationship to the *ulema* (the learned in Muslim jurisprudence). Here, he built a new Friday mosque replacing the Church of the Holy Apostles that contained the tombs of the Byzantine emperors. The Ottoman complex that replaced the Byzantine church would soon house Mehmed II's royal tomb, the first among the set of royal mausolea that would mark Istanbul as the Ottoman dynastic capital. The domed form of the mosque contained references to Hagia Sophia, now the Ayasofya Mosque, as much as to Ottoman architectural ventures of the early 1400s. It stood at the center of a vast plaza measuring 210 m to each side, which, in its turn, bespoke the resonance of Italianate ideas of urban order finding meaning in Ottoman Istanbul. The eight madrasas (the *Semaniye*) lined up its north and south became the highest-ranking religious schools of the Ottoman domains. A hospice, public kitchen, and hospital were beyond the mosque–madrasa core, expanding the strict geometry of the complex towards the east, where the aqueduct of Valens once again functioned as part of the city's newly restored water distribution system.

Smaller complexes were centered by hospice-mosques, an adaptation of the earlier multifunctional buildings (*imaret*) that housed prayer, ritual, and accommodative spaces around a domed hall, often located outside city walls. Retaining this overall layout, such buildings in Istanbul were now founded as Friday mosques, and architects sought to emphasize the separation of spaces for prayer and preaching from other functions. The emergence of such new spatial and institutional frameworks were linked to processes of Sunnitization, and to the patrons' changing relationship with the *ghazi*s (holy warriors) and dervishes, who had been the main actors in the frontier ventures of the Ottomans, and the primary audience for such buildings (Kafescioğlu 2009; Terzioğlu 2012).

The extended (and continuously expanding) imperial household emerged into the urban arena as the builder of the city's institutional infrastructure and the maker of its imperial image (Figure 33.1). Mehmed II's new slave-servant (*kul*) elite was largely of Byzantine and Balkan aristocratic backgrounds. The sixteenth-century military-administrator elites were mostly palace-educated individuals conscripted through the child levy, who rose to the vizierate and grand vizierate and often became royal sons-in-law through marriage to princesses. Alongside the monarch and dynastic family, by the late 1500s, palace servants rose to

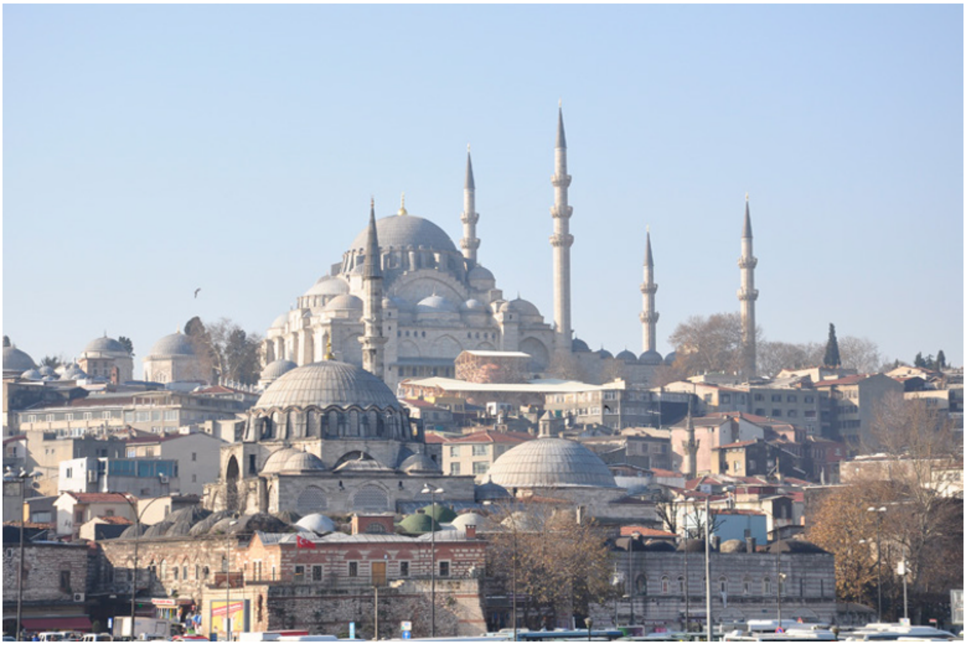


Figure 33.1 Istanbul, view towards the peninsula from the north, the Süleymaniye complex (1550–1557), the mosque of Rüstem Pasha (*c*. 1560), and the Tahtakale public bath (*c*. 1460) in the port area. Source: Ç. Kafescioğlu.

prominence among the patrons of the city's mosque complexes, madrasas, hospices and Sufi lodges, bathhouses, inns, and caravanserais. While the fortunes of various elite groups fluctuated, and their priorities regarding urban interventions changed, notions of shared obligation overlapping with spatio-visual articulations of elite identity remained constant (Necipoğlu 2005: 27–214). Complementing their dynastic counterparts, these foundations were often ashlar stone masonry and brick buildings with domical superstructures, which created Istanbul's famed skyline, rising above the low-lying, mostly wood and mud-brick residential and commercial fabric.

A multivalent transformation in Ottoman political culture from the late 1530s onwards formed the background to the making of Istanbul's imperial image in the sixteenth century. The reign of Sultan Süleyman, the "Magnificent" according to European sources, and the "Lawgiver" (*kanuni*) according to later Ottomans, saw the empire expand further into Mesopotamia, western Iran, and central Europe. Transformations in the political realm introduced further bureaucratization and hierarchization to Ottoman rule. This new phase in Ottoman state-building overlapped with processes of confessionalization, Sunni indoctrination, social and religious disciplining, centralization, and the growing power and visibility of bureaucratic and religious elites (Kafadar 1994; Terzioğlu 2012).

Istanbul's urban image was reshaped during this period, and more particularly during the latter half of Süleyman's reign, as emerging political and cultural predilections began to find expression in the most expansive phase of construction the city witnessed through its Ottoman centuries. Through the designs and the supervision of Sinan – the chief architect between 1539 and 1588 for Süleyman and his two successors – the ruler, his wife and daughter, and members of the imperial council undertook the construction of public works. The latter also built palace complexes, home to their growing households modeled on the imperial court. Sinan would boastfully recount in his autobiography that congregational mosques ranked first among all his works (*Sinan's Autobiographies* 2006). Displaying his mastery of domed construction, these centrally planned and prominently located edifices marked vistas of the capital city along its ancient ceremonial arteries, and across the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus (Figure 33.1). They contributed to the making of an Ottoman urban image interlocked with the city's topography of hilly landmasses interconnected by bodies of water. An Istanbulite mode of urban visuality, privileging visual connections between individual monuments and focal points was articulated, founded on the interrelationships of topography and architecture as well as on notions of sociopolitical order. In these years the Süleymaniye complex, a monument to Ottoman politico-religious claims to being a world power, was designed by Sinan to redefine the skyline of Istanbul with the magnified and eloquently sculpted mass of its mosque surrounded by the myriad domes of its dependencies projecting over the Golden Horn. Drawing on urbanistic explorations of the previous century, it continued the dialogue across urban space that Ottoman patrons and architects had engaged in, with references to the architecture of the Hagia Sophia and to the composition of Mehmed II's earlier mosque complex, which had also been set on a prominent location, visible from the water and the shores across (Kuban 2007: 249–347; Kuran 1996; Necipoğlu 2005).

The turn of the seventeenth century brought a further change in urban ventures of the members of the imperial council and the newly influential servants of the court. A more interactive relationship to the urban context, and particularly the Divan Yolu, shaped their foundations. Many were madrasa and mausoleum complexes featuring a prominently displayed fountain and public water dispenser (*sebil*), at times also housing a Sufi lodge. The last major royal intervention in the cityscape during this period was a mosque complex founded by Ahmed I in 1603. Modeled on its predecessors, it regulated the Atmeydanı (the former Hippodrome), and responded to the growing vivacity of the main public square and to the increasing visibility of the court in the city (Kuban 2007: 381–392; Necipoğlu 2005: 506–519).

Isfahan

Millenarian expectations, conquest, and renewal are salient features of the foundation *topoi* shared by the three Muslim capital cities. For the Safavid dynasty, the choice of Isfahan and the transfer in 1598 of the capital from Qazvin in northwestern Iran undergirded the articulation of an imperial identity, a political discourse predicated on the adoption of Imami Shiʿism as the official religion of the empire.

The Safavid family had emerged out of a messianic mission spearheaded by Shah Ismaʿil (r. 1501–1524), the founder of the dynasty. Beyond the charisma of the warrior-king, the political articulation of its authority under the banner of Shiʿism had taken nearly a century to solidify, an experiment in engineering a social order on multiple fronts that found its locus of expression and representation in Isfahan. The venture was imperial in scale and hinged on processes of political centralization and of sociocultural centering. One of the outcomes was an emerging practice of kingship that revived the idea of Iran by recasting the empire in a Perso-Shiʿi guise, the traces of which were made visible in Safavid ceremonials and in their built environment in Isfahan. Transforming itself into an absolute authority vested in the person and position of the shah involved the empowerment of the *ghulam* (synonymous with the Ottoman Turkish *kul*, or slave-servant) corps of converted Georgian, Armenian, and Circassian members of the royal household. The members of this corps shared the military and administrative leadership roles and the power vested inside the inner sanctum, the Harem, where the womenfolk of this converted community became the mothers of future kings (Babaie *et al.* 2004). The rise to power of a new elite marginalized the earlier mode of rule, in which a confederate of Turkmen governors and generals – the Qizilbash, so-called for their distinctive turbans with long red batons – held sway, supporting the Safavid household in its rise to prominence in northwestern Iran and eastern Anatolia (Babayan 2003). The economic face of the sociopolitical reorganization shared in the alliances and competitions among vested groups: the royal monopolies (especially of silk trade) and their Armenian and European facilitators; the "capitalist" ventures of the new mercantile communities that engaged in long-distance trade, especially among the *ghulam* and the Armenians of New Julfa (Matthee 1999). This was accompanied by the rise of a middling urban class that could build sizable houses and partake in the modes and sites of sociability where painters, poets, and entertainers mingled with merchants, craftsmen, and functionaries. On the religious side, the successful, albeit slow, process of conversion of the majority Sunni population had inspired the incorporation into the administrative system of the Shiʿi *ulama*, especially those recruited from Jabal Amil in southern Lebanon (Abisaab 2004).

Just as Istanbul was the third Ottoman capital after Bursa and Edirne, Isfahan too was the third and last of the Safavid capitals, following Tabriz (1501–1555/56) and Qazvin (1555/56–1598). It was chosen for a number of reasons indicative of its potentialities for standing far enough from the battle-weary Ottoman–Safavid frontiers, and for its centrality with respect to the maritime trade routes of the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Persian Gulf. Contemporary observers also emphasize the city's location for its abundance of water and its temperate climate. As the historian Iskandar Beg Munshi tells us, Shah ʻAbbas I "having gone there often, the special qualities of that paradisiacal city, the suitability of its location, and the waters of Zayande River as well as the *kawthar* [Paradise]-like channels which branch off the aforementioned river and flow in every direction, [all of these things] lodged in the resplendent heart [of the shah]" (in McChesney 1988: 110).

Medieval Isfahan, the Seljuq city of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, pivoted on its famed Friday mosque and its commercial and administrative district at the center of a walled area, a scheme that inspired the Safavid layout to its south. Two urban loci formed the backbone of the Safavid city: a massive *maydan* (public square) and a tree-lined *khiyaban* (promenade). Both were situated beyond the walled medieval city and flanked, in effect, an old royal garden area known, since at least the fifteenth century, as the Bagh-i Naqsh-i Jahan (Image of the World Garden). This was also to be the designation of the adjacent city center, Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan, which took the place of what used to be the extra-mural hippodrome (*maydan-i asb*). Its roughly rectangular open space, used for equestrian exercises, was not unlike the Atmeydanı (former Byzantine hippodrome) in Ottoman Istanbul (Figure 33.2).

The initial constructions of 1590–1591 indicated the desire to capitalize on a fresh start in Isfahan. The public square – delineated by a double-story, double-row

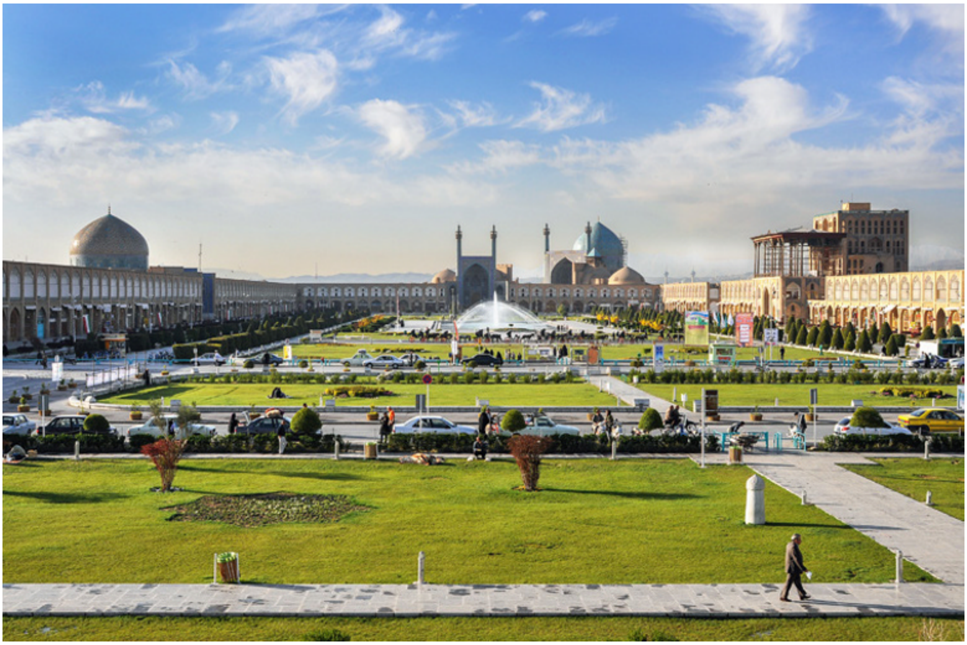


FIGURE 33.2 Isfahan, Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan, view from the roof of the Qaysariyya: Shaykh Lutfallah mosque on the east, the ʿAli Qapu Palace on the west, and Masjid-i Jadid-i ʿAbbasi on the south. Source: M. Sarraf. Reproduced with permission.

of shops in 1602 – served multiple urban and royal functions: shops, coffeehouses, taverns, and brothels surrounded it (Galdieri 1970). The ʿAli Qapu (Lofty Gate) Palace on the west side gave access to the expansive imperial precinct, *Daulatkhana-yi saltanati* (Royal Abode of Rule). The Qaysariyya (royal covered market) at the north end linked the Safavid and the old Seljuq squares. It regulated the pulse of life along the commercial artery and its branches through the daily rhythms of opening and closing its doors, and the martial music performed from its upper-story *naqqarakhana* (kettledrum house). The Shaykh Lutfallah Mosque articulated its singularity as a royal chapel by facing the ʿAli Qapu across the Maydan and by its visually distinctive single dome. With an adjacent madrasa, it was built for the son-in-law of Shah ʿAbbas, one of the patronized Shiʿi scholars to have partaken in the religio-political restructuring of Safavid polity. At the short southern end of the central plaza, the enormous Masjid-i Jadid-i ʿAbbasi (New Mosque of ʿAbbas) was begun in 1611 and completed under Shah Safi (r. 1629–1642). This four-iwan mosque was configured to include a double madrasa and to respond to its location on the Maydan. Its profile – accentuated by the gradual rise of iwans, slender engaged minarets, and a massive dome – presented a dramatic vista at the south side of the square. As the first congregational mosque of the Safavid dynasty, it marked the resolution of a longstanding debate over the legitimacy of performing the Friday noon prayer in the absence of the Twelfth Imam, who has been in Occultation since the tenth century (Babaie 2008: 86–99).

Housing the imperial apparatus, the Daulatkhana (palace) was flanked by the Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan on its eastern side and the Chahar Bagh Promenade on its western. The royal enclosure eschewed the high fortifications of Istanbul or Delhi for "soft" walls: gardens and orchards on the *khiyaban* side, shops and cafes on the Maydan. Despite the appearance of openness, monumental gates regulated communication between court and city. The ʿAli Qapu and the Harem gates opened onto the Maydan and gave access to the administrative, service, workshop, and living sections. The five-story ʿAli Qapu housed the offices of the judiciary and the special guards. In addition to providing entry into the precinct's ceremonial functions, it featured a prominent *talar*, an elegantly roofed pillared hall on its third floor, facing the Maydan and serving as a stage for royal ceremonies. The domed Tauhidkhana dedicated to the Qizilbash devotees of the dynasty, articulated in its location behind the 'Ali Qapu, the symbolic presence of the Sufi element in Safavid polity. With the Shaykh Lutfallah Mosque, this axis linked the public square and the royal precinct representing foundational Safavid claims to sovereignty. On the *khiyaban* side, the royal precinct accessed the public promenade at its northernmost terminus with the two-story Jahannama pavilion whence the women of the household viewed strolling denizens or ceremonial events.

The tree-lined *khiyaban*, with a water channel along its entire 4 km, connected Darvaza Daulat, a preexisting city gate, to the new urban developments all the way to the suburban terraced garden palace of Hezar Jarib (Thousand Acres) on the foothills of the Soffa Mountain in the south. The Bridge of Allah Verdi Khan

(1602–1607) together with the verdant public promenade served as an arterial link between the older northwestern neighborhoods and the new residential quarters of the transplanted Armenian and Tabrizi merchant communities. The intersection of the *khiyaban* and the river thus undergirded the larger urban scheme of Safavid Isfahan whereby the master plan reads as a four-quadrant or *chahar-bagh* scheme (a generic name for a classic garden pattern) (Emrani 2013).

Similar patterns of urban development inspired later expansions of Isfahan. Under Shah ʿAbbas II (r. 1642–1666), a second major campaign took shape further to the east of new Isfahan and along the Zayanda River with residential, palatial, and elite features and connecting elements: a bridge serving as a water-management device, as much as for public picnics, royal feasts or for watching fireworks and boating parties on the river. This complex of buildings included the 1651–1652 Khwaju (Hasanabad) Bridge, a palatial ensemble on the banks of the Zayanda River (1650s), the small Juʾi (Rivulet) Bridge of 1657–1658, for the riverfront palaces, as well as the 1659–1660 project of a second *khiyaban*, Khwaju Chahar Bagh and its residential quarters.

As in Istanbul and Delhi, state building and its urban centering implicated collectives of Isfahani elite. Many large-scale projects were sponsored, funded, and supervised by the *ghulam*s (Babaie *et al.* 2004). Allah Verdi Khan, the builder of the famous bridge, was a *ghulam*; a converted Armenian general and a father figure to Shah ʿAbbas I. Mohibb ʿAli Beg the *ghulam* as well as the supervisor (*lala*) of the young recruits was the chief officer of the royal buildings department (*sarkar-i imarat-i khassa-yi sharifa-yi Sifahan*). In that capacity, he supervised infrastructural hydraulic engineering projects and the building of a new urban quarter with 500 houses for the Tabrizi emigrants on the scheme of a city: a *maydan*, bazaars, and a *naqqarakhana*. He donated 30 percent of the construction funds of the Masjid-i Jadid-i ʿAbbasi on whose gate his name appears alongside the architect's and the shah's. The grand vizier of Shah Safi and Shah ʿAbbas II, Saru Taqi, also from the ranks of the *ghulam*s, supervised the buildings of the Talar-i Tavila Palace (inside the Daulatkhana), the Ayinakhana Palace by the Zayanda River, and the *talar* addition to the ʿAli Qapu. The court physician Hakim Davud-i Isfahani, who left Isfahan for service at the court of the Mughals, built the monumental Hakim Mosque (1663) in a privileged neighborhood close to the Daulatkhana. Mothers and grandmothers of the shahs funded madrasas located at key junctions of the market complex (Gaube and Wirth 1978).

Urban developments between the reigns of Shah ʿAbbas I and Shah ʿAbbas II remain recognizable in the Safavid capital, a picture almost completely lost in Tabriz and Qazvin. Although most of the campaigns dating from after 1650 are lost, they too contributed to the urban growth until the Afghan siege in 1722 and the collapse of Safavid Isfahan. By the 1670s, the French traveler Jean Chardin noted some 162 mosques, 48 madrasas, 1802 caravanserais, 273 bathhouses, and 12 cemeteries within a 24-mile circumference (Ferrier 1996: 44). This was a reflection of the enormous growth of Isfahan in population and the complexity of its cosmopolitan life, which finds a parallel in Istanbul and Delhi and in other early modern capitals.

Delhi

Delhi, an assembly of several older cities extending from the early historic period to the Mughal period was already a popular pilgrimage destination with a plethora of saintly loci, equally important to the Mughal dynasty. The Mughals situated themselves within a sacred landscape predicated on the veneration of members of the mystical Chishti Order of Sufis, and found a spiritual magnet in Delhi's Shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325), one of the ancestral figures of the order. The re-appropriation of the city as a political center of the empire was marked by the addition of Shahjahanabad in 1639, laying the ground for Delhi to become the permanent capital in the era following Shah Jahan's reign (1628–1658). The Mughal court, under the authority of the emperor, who acted as the king of kings, represented one of the most diverse ruling bodies of the early modern period. While in the Ottoman and the Safavid domains participation in the highest echelons of the court apparatus was mostly predicated upon conversion, the Mughal polity, where Muslims remained a minority, had to accommodate the majority Hindu nobility and subjects. Notwithstanding frontier conflicts with the Safavids and the Uzbeks, Mughal territorial sovereignty was a negotiated affair between the center and the subject and neighboring Hindu principalities involving the continual mobility of the emperor and his military presence across the regions of the empire. Such a practice of centralization entailed the presence of the emperor, hence the almost simultaneous construction of several capital cities – Agra, Fatehpur Sikri (inhabited for a brief period between 1571 and 1585 as a satellite of Agra), Delhi, and Lahore – and the prominence of monumental royal encampments.

Shahjahanabad's scheme of a walled city along the Yamuna River resonated with earlier thirteenth- and fourteenth-century incarnations of Delhi, including Siri, Tughluqabad, Firuzabad, Jahanpanah, along with the Mughal capitals of Fatehpur Sikri and Agra (Asher 2000: 276–279). Delhi of the later sixteenth century, in the area between the Purana Qilʿa, the fort built by emperor Humayun (r. 1531–1540 and 1555–1556) and his tomb – in close proximity to the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya –may have been a further inspiration for Shah Jahan's spaciously laid out new capital anchored to a new palace-fort (Lowry 1984). The order and symmetry of the urban plan in Shahjahanabad was inspired by the recent example of Isfahan and perhaps by Hindu notions of geometric and spatial order. Shah Jahan's historian Saleh Kamboh suggests that the design was an alternative to the perceived chaos of Agra, its disorderly urban developments and congestion having made that city inadequate for the emperor's ambitions (Blake 1991: 26–36). Kamboh also noted the emperor's dissatisfaction with the inadequate scale of the Agra Fort for the restructured imperial apparatus. The Delhi Fort's monumentality and its strict bilateral axiality accommodated the increasingly grandiose and tightly codified courtly ceremonials (Koch 1994). The Qilʿa-i Mubarak (Sacred Fort, better known as the Red Fort; 1639–1648) was designed as a rectangular enclosure with chamfered corners overlooking the river to its northeast. It was anchored to the Salimgarh, the fort built by the Afghan Sher Shah that was completed and used by Mughal emperors prior to Shah Jahan. In line with widely observed predilections in palatial architecture, the Red Fort was subdivided into public (ceremonial and administrative) and private (residential apartments and gardens) sections, along intersecting axes of a grid of routes and canals.

The conceptual core of this order was the throne-window (*jharoka*) representing Shah Jahan as its apex, at the center of the *diwan-i ʿamm* (public audience hall). This generative source of the court's internal architectural order extended into two directions: towards the river across a quadri-form courtyard, ending with the window of appearances (*jharoka-yi darshan*) at which the emperor appeared daily as the sun-king; and towards the fort's main gate and the city beyond. Here was a sequence of a vast courtyard and the gate-like structure of the *naqqara-khana*, a covered bazaar street, and the gate complex. The fort faced the city with its colossal defensive aspect: a massive gate complex, crenellated wall, flanking towers, ramparts, and moat. At the foot of the fort walls was an open buffer zone, a "great royal square" that, according to Bernier, functioned as a hippodrome, a place for the visiting nobility to pitch tents, and as a gathering space for weekly markets and entertainment for the denizens of Shahjahanabad (Bernier 1826: 276–278).

The internal main axis of the palace continued beyond the royal gate, into the main artery of Chandni Chawk, a tree-lined arcaded market street. Grafted onto a preexisting canal, famed as Nahr-i Bihisht (River of Paradise), the nearly 4-km-long street opened midway into an octagonal space, a *chawk*, in front of the large caravanserai–bathhouse–garden complex to the north, before reaching its other terminus, the Fatehpuri Masjid. The mosque built by a wife of the emperor was one of a cluster of constructions all dating to the 1650s that augmented Shah Jahan's urban scheme. The vastly scaled Jamaʿ Masjid (Shahjahanabad's congregational Friday mosque) dominated the cityscape with its elevated position on a natural hillock to the southwest of the fort. Built in red sandstone, it resonated with the equally massive Red Fort to which it was connected through the Khass Bazaar street, or the Royal Market. Within the same years, Shah Jahan presented his daughter and wife with the expansive Jahanara gardens to the north of Chandni Chawk. Unlike the urban quarters to the south of Chandni Chawk, some of which preexisted Shah Jahan's project, the areas north of the canal were sparsely occupied and thus provided the elite with opportunities to build spacious mansions and gardens. Other gardens encircled the fort and the northern side of the city (Mitra Chenoy 1998: 145). The evidence of gardens along the riverfront, though fewer than those of Agra, indicates that they were the purview of the royal household and the highest ranks among the courtiers.

The palace gate to the southwest was connected to the city's Delhi Gate through another straight market street along a canal with a reservoir and water jets. At its beginning stood the Akbarabadi Mosque, built by another of the royal wives and completed in 1650. These two straight avenues, each punctuated by a polygonal opening, housed the city's most prestigious marketplaces and incorporated water architecture. Together with the fort, the Jamaʿ Masjid, and the royal bazaar, they formed the backbone of an urban master plan (Figure 33.3). The neighborhoods were filled with the elite mansions (*haveli*s) of the Persian, Afghan, Jain and Hindu courtiers, and imperial officers (*mansabdar*s). Their extended households occupied these residential complexes, partly modeled after the palace (Blake 1991). Contemporary sources suggest that some *haveli*s constituted the nuclei of local concentrations of professional and ethno-religious groups within Shahjahanabad. Merchants, artisans, and other denizens lived above their shops, in modest mud brick houses, and multistory buildings. Their places of worship dotted the cityscape, with varying locations and scales.

The River Yamuna and the system of canals and reservoirs were always vital to the landscape of urban life in the Delhi area, as they were in Isfahan. The Mughals used and transformed the extant infrastructure of water, through

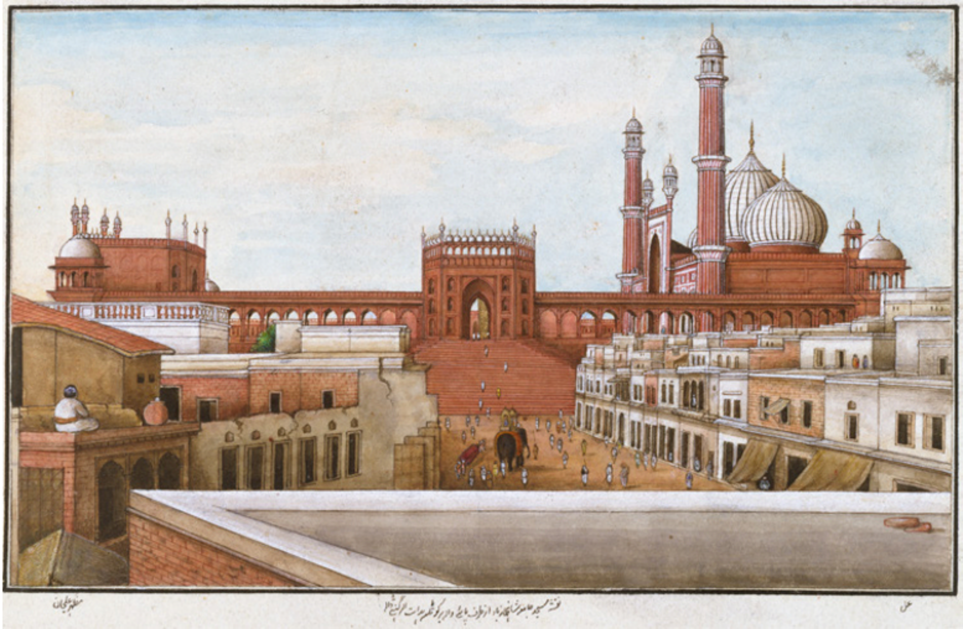


Figure 33.3 Ali Mazhar Khan, Jamaʿ Masjid in Delhi and the Khass bazaar leading to it; *c*. 1840. Victoria and Albert Museum, IS.482-1950. Source: Victoria and Albert Museum.

their formal gardens. Suburban production and wholesale commerce maintained the link between Shahjahanabad and its hinterland. Shrine complexes that were so central to Mughal narratives of rulership were continuously venerated and supported. That many of the Mughals chose to be buried near saintly figures such as Nizamuddin Auliya or Qutb al-Din Bakhtiar Kaki (popularly known as Qutb al-Qutub, Pole of Poles) in Mehrauli (the oldest of the Delhi cities) attests to the interconnectedness of the living fabric of the immense area that constituted Delhi.

Court into the City: Urban Spaces of Ceremonial

Points of entry into and departure from the city, processional routes, and sites of politico-religious symbolism marked nodes in the ceremonial and ritual map of the three capitals. They connected court, city, suburbs, and the imperial domains at large, constituting stages where courtly and urban identities were articulated and visualized. A set of performances at or on routes between palaces, mosques, mausoleums, public squares, arteries, and city gates represented and dramatized notions of dynastic continuity, the will to conquer, the embodiment of just rule in the person of the monarch, and its administration on the part of the ruling body. Pageantry involved displays of precious and exotic objects, textiles, jewelry, and animals adding a dimension of the wondrous to the spectacle. The capital city's ritual and ceremonial map was one of the sites of political communication and negotiation between the multiple actors of the courtly and the urban spheres.

In Istanbul, beyond the visual connections of the Topkapı Palace to the surrounding cityscape, the court was ceremonially linked to the capital through well-established performative practices of passage and visitation that reinforced the notion of Istanbul as the *dar al-saltana*, the seat of rule. Between two main points of entry into the urban realm, the palace gate and Edirnekapı, lay Istanbul's ceremonial artery (the *Shahrah*, king's road or Divan Yolu) partly overlapping with the Byzantine Mese. Accession ceremonies involved a series of rites of passage and rituals of mutual recognition on the part of the ruling body, the military, and the denizens. They were performed at the shrine at Eyüp and at the ancestral tombs, along the connecting arteries, and finally at the Topkapı: a complex superposition of courtly, urban, and suburban rituals designed to fill the tension-ridden void between reigns (Necipoğlu 2005: 33–46). Those spaces and routes where ceremonial was staged to reinforce courtly hegemony were occasionally also the places where popular dissent was articulated. Hence the *Shahrah* that connected the ceremonial gate of entry to Istanbul with the Porte, also linked the square flanking the janissary barracks (Etmeydanı) to the Hippodrome (Atmeydanı), stages at times of violent popular uprisings, especially towards the end of our period. The grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha's palace on the Atmeydanı (Figure 33.4) included a *mehterhane* (offices of the military band) akin to the royal *naqqarakhana*s of Isfahan and Delhi. Built in the 1520s also as an extension of the highly secluded Topkapı Palace – in analogy to the Byzantine royal loggia – it was a turning point in the making of the public space where court and city met for multivalent displays of self-representation.

Visibility and access underpinned the urban-spatial character of ceremonial in Isfahan. Safavid authority derived from a synthesis of ancient Iranian ideals and practices of kingship, as preserved and disseminated through the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), with the newly articulated Imami Shiʿi notions of legitimacy. The emergent structure of Perso-Shiʿi rulership considered chivalry, hospitality, humility, and authority to be mutually inclusive concepts and strategies. In Isfahan, the malleable blending of the political and spiritual authority translated as a charisma of rule to be represented and performed spatially and publicly. Shah ʿAbbas I called himself the "dog at the threshold of ʿAli," a phrase that was inscribed at the entrance into the ʿAli Qapu, the same palace where ceremonials of feasting took place at its iwan, and later its *talar*, and whence the guests could be seen and heard, while festivals of light and sound, equestrian games (including polo), or initiation, gifting, and mourning rituals unfolded in the Maydan. Processionals, accompanying ambassadorial convoys, performing crafts on floats in celebration of the shah's entry into the city, or the parade of exotic animals and precious horses are described by European visitors to Safavid Isfahan as urban performances between city gates, the Qaysariyya, the Maydan, and along winding streets leading to the city's major public arenas.

Ottoman and Safavid protocols of courtly ceremonial had, in diverse ways, involved the corporeal presence and the mobility of the monarch within the urban sphere. The urban dimension of Mughal ceremonial, in comparison, was focused more specifically on the palace-fort and its immediate vicinity. To urban audiences who were not part of the ruler's daily audience, the passage of the courtiers through Delhi streets to reach the square at the Red Fort's entrance, displaying exotic animals, splendid objects and textiles was a spectacle that hinted at the pomp and magnificence within the walls. Urban ceremonial may have paled in comparison: weekly processions of Shah Jahan to his new capital's congregational mosque, exiting the Badshahi Darwaza and crossing one of the city's most crowded streets, aligned with musketeers and accompanied by a train of courtiers seemed lacking to Bernier in view of the "pompous processions, or rather the masquerades" of the Ottoman sultan (Bernier 1826: 318–319; Mitra Chenoy 1998: 152). Even if Shah Jahan's move to Delhi marked a disposition towards more sedentary courtly practices, royal progressions within the imperial realm and between centers of political importance continued as an alternative to urban-based ceremonial. Shah Jahan's historians and painters record meticulously planned and performed royal processions through territory and arrivals at cities. They have little to say, however, on imperial progressions as played out within the space of Delhi.

Public Spaces and Modes of Sociability, Old and New

Public spaces of encounter and interaction, places to stage imperial enterprises and to become urbanites, feature in all three early modern cities. They may differ in scale and formality of architectural articulation, in the balance of the ceremonial and quotidian functions, or in the way in which the degree of access for the public was regulated. Newly configured urban squares in Istanbul, Delhi, and Isfahan offer some of the most prominent examples in contemporary Eurasia. The famous Ottoman representations of the state processions and public and guild participation at the Atmeydanı gave a contemporary imperial and social meaning to the old Byzantine Hippodrome. Mughal emperors did not construct purpose-built squares for the sort of ceremonial–public interface we see in Istanbul and Isfahan. Nevertheless, Bernier tells us that the space before the high gate into the Red Fort of Delhi was a busy marketplace where tradesmen and denizens met, exchanged, and entertained (Bernier 1826: 276–279).

Isfahan's Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan is perhaps the most complete articulation of this idea: an enormous, rectangular space that anchored the urban scheme and its social functions, both public and royal. This was a space defined by and regularized through monumental architecture. At the ʿAli Qapu Palace, overlooking the public stage of the *maydan*, shahs sat, ambassadors were feasted, and dignitaries were girded; from there, polo games, mock battles, fireworks, executions, and processions could be watched. The striking contemporaneity of Ahmed I's mosque complex on Istanbul's Atmeydanı (1603–1617) with Shah ʿAbbas's Maydan project in Isfahan underlines not only the common dynamics of the period but also the mutual awareness of Ottoman and Safavid patrons alongside their politics of long-term conflict (Figure 33.4, Figure 33.5). Ahmed I's mosque, which immediately faced the royal palace on the Hippodrome and regularized the vast urban space, was in fact the final and monumental step in a series of architectural, ceremonial, social, and ritual transformations in the area within the preceding decades, concomitant to the transformation of the Ottoman sultan's public image as he became more bound to the palace and capital city, and as new actors emerged into the urban arena.

Beyond the *maydan*s, social life in early modern Istanbul, Isfahan, and Delhi spanned a great many venues and possibilities, which are neither fully explored nor evenly studied and documented, hence our selective approach to the subject in the following discussion. A medieval legacy of the larger Islamic world, the *waqf* (legal endowment) was a principal mode in all three cities for the participation of the elite and the commoners, including (to a lesser degree) non-Muslim denizens. As acts of charity, piety, socialization, and networking, a multitude of endowments – often much smaller in size than the massive imperial and elite foundations – benefited public sites such as mosques, lodges and shrines, churches, temples, and hospices.

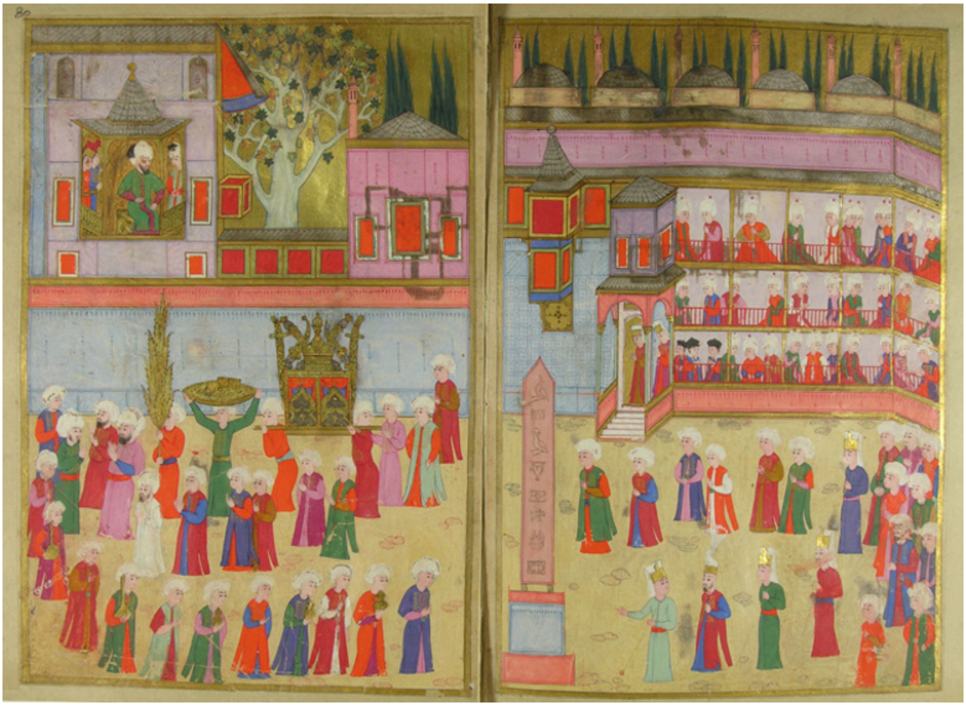


Figure 33.4 Procession of the Bedestan merchants and their apprentices in the Atmeydanı during the circumcision festival of 1582, with the Ibrahim Pasha palace and its royal loggia in the upper register, Intizami, *Surname-i Humayun*, *c*. 1587. Source: Topkapı Palace Museum, H. 1344, fol. 190r–191a. Reproduced with permission.

Waqf of more modest offerings included prayer and Qurʾan manuscripts, support for their institutions' personnel, and charities. In 1600, 41 percent of all such endowments in Istanbul were women's foundations, pointing to their share in the city's life as founders and supporters of urban institutions (Canatar 2004). If pious endowments created invisible webs of social interrelationship, the physical sites and places presented some of the nodal points of a growing social and cultural life. While mosques dominated the cityscapes, churches, synagogues, and temples remained restricted with respect to their location, modest scale, and architecture.

Sufi networks formed connections within the imperial territories and beyond. Each capital city housed Sufi hospices, shrines, and reliquaries that were sites of visitation and social interaction. Delhi must be singled out for the intensity of life revolving around shrines and Sufi hospices within Shahjahanabad and particularly in greater Delhi. In 1614 the biographer Muhammad Sadiq Dihlawi completed his work on Sufis buried in imperial Delhi, with notes on the locations and dates of 125 holy graves. In the words of ʿAbd al-Rahim Chishti writing *c*. 1647, elite and commoner alike visited such spaces (cited in Green 2012: 54–55). As

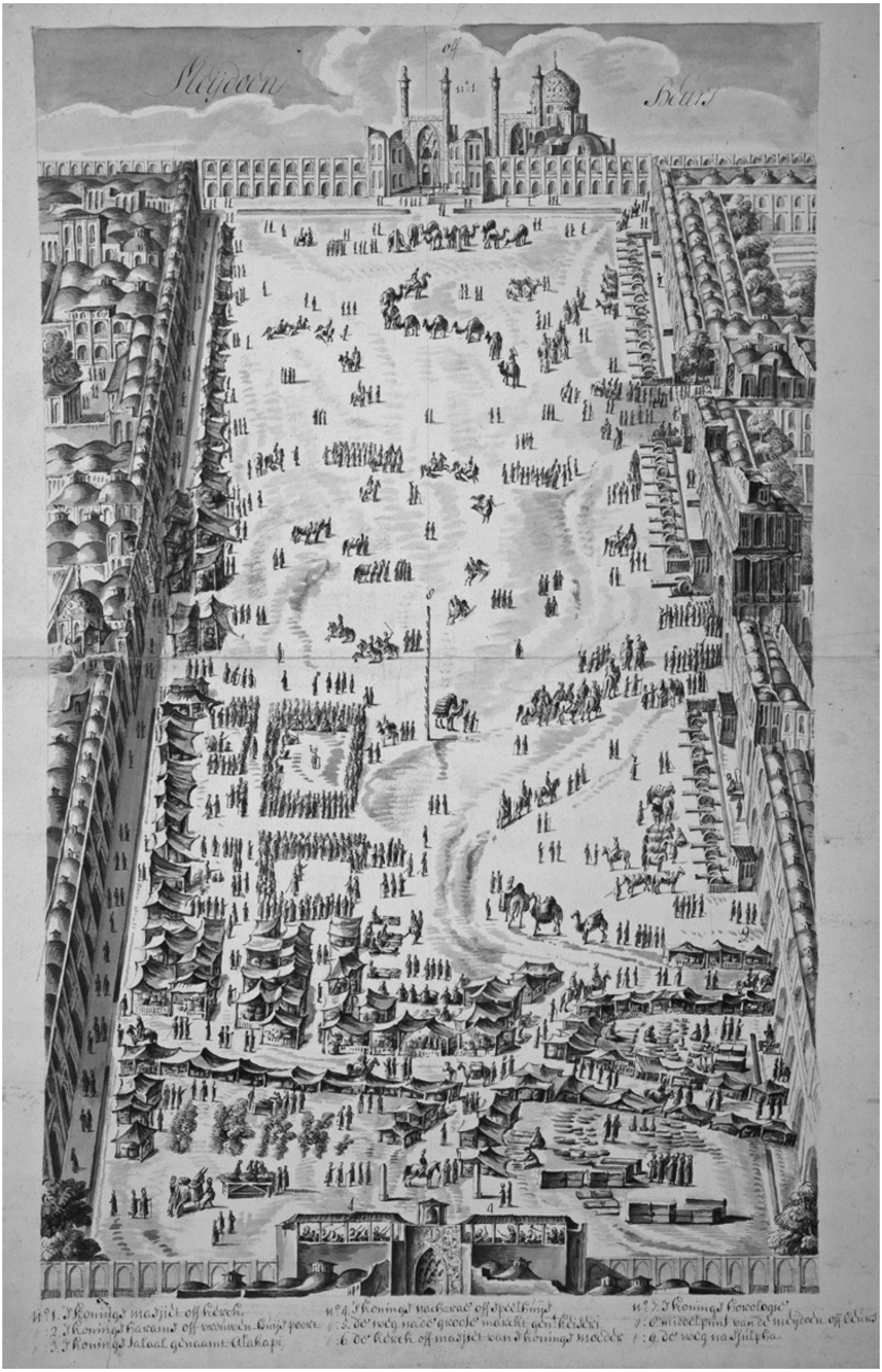

Meydaen off Beurs
no. 1
No. 1. 's Konings masjiet off kerck
" 2. 's Konings haram off vrouwen huijs poort
" 3. 's Konings salaal genaamt Alakapi
No. 4. 's Konings nacharae off speelhuijs
" 5. de weg na de groote marckt gen.t keiseri
" 6. de kerck off masjiet van 's Konings moeder
No. 7. 's Konings horologie
" 8. 't middelpunt van de meydaen off beurs
" 9. de weg na Julpha

Figure 33.5 Isfahan, Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan. Washed pen drawing by G. Hofsted van Essen (1703) 420 × 712 mm (with caption). Leiden, University Library, COLLBN Port. 314-I N 58. Source: Leiden University Library. Reproduced with permission.

elsewhere in the Islamic world, women found a more welcoming space in shrines and tombs; commemorative sites and rituals offered permeable gender boundaries compared to sites of normative religion. *ʿUrs* celebrations, the rituals performed on death anniversaries of Sufi saints, involving circumambulations of the tomb, feasts, recitals of music and poetry, elaborate illuminations, and participation by denizens, were a major component of the spatio-social articulation of urbanity in Delhi. In the Mughal era, *ʿurs* had evolved into performances of royal, as well as saintly commemoration, at times patronized by the emperor or members of the elite (Green 2012: 33–64). Niccolao Manucci, a witness to the reign of Shah Jahan, and sometime resident of Delhi, noted the festive Thursday visits to saints' tombs when men and women went to the gardens surrounding the tomb of the Sufi saint Qutb al-Din, adjacent to the first Friday mosque of Delhi, the Qutb Mosque (1192 onwards) in Mehrauli (Manucci 1913: 272–273).

Another site of urban sociability was the public bathhouse, found in residential quarters as well as places of trade and manufacture, and in areas of Muslim and non-Muslim concentrations alike. Their construction and high visibility in cities of the Islamic lands have often been linked solely to requirements of ritual cleanliness in Muslim religious practice, a notion that disregards the wealth of information on them as spaces of socialization. Ottoman authors described Istanbul's public bathhouses as "splendid and costly" buildings, "collecting arts of all varieties" (Kafescioğlu 2009: 106). Ottoman bathhouses played a remarkable role in the creation of social space across gender and confessional divides. According to Lady Mary Montagu in the early eighteenth century, the bathhouse was "the women's coffeehouse, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented &c." (Montagu 1906: 106).

Other spaces of public encounter for pleasurable sociability such as taverns and creameries often occupied marginally located and modestly built structures. The coffeehouse emerged as a novelty in the middle of the sixteenth century and proliferated with remarkable speed. The coffeehouses at Istanbul's Tahtakale district, around Isfahan's Maydan and along its Chahar Bagh, and along Delhi's Chandni Chawk became centers for artists, artisans, poets, performers, merchants, bureaucrats, and even high society to mingle and enjoy conversation, music, storytelling, poetry recitations, and the company of young men. As new social spaces, they presented potentialities for the articulation of discontent and solicited intense debate on their permissibility and legal retributions (Dargah Quli Khan 1989: 25; Hattox 1985; Kafadar 2014; Matthee 2005: 144–174).

Urbanity in all three cities hinged on the availability, depending on varying degrees of social access, to "green" leisure, such as the gardens surrounding the Kağıthane River and palatial gardens along the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus in Istanbul, and royal garden mansions along the Yamuna riverfront in Shahjahanabad (Koch 2006: 32; Necipoğlu 1997). Isfahan provided its denizens with a remarkable array of public green spaces of leisure. The most famous was the Chahar Bagh Promenade, where "the khans, great amirs, viziers, sadrs, and noble ʿamils who held official rank at the time, … erected fine chahar-bagh parks" (Junabadi in McChesney 1988: 113) along the 4-km long, tree-lined avenue linking the old walled city with the new quarters by crossing the Zayanda River over the Allah Verdi Khan Bridge. The avenue itself, with its running water channel, ornamental pools, and shade trees served the strolling denizens – a picture ordinarily conjured by the Tuileries Garden in Paris, a royal garden-palace complex not opened to the public until later in the seventeenth century. Occasionally the entire area was reserved for the women of the court and womenfolk of the bazaar merchants brought wares and entertainment.

Coffeehouses, taverns and baths, new public gardens and parks shared in the democratization of leisure and sociability in Istanbul, Isfahan, and Delhi. The preceding glance at these three cities hints at the reciprocities between imperial agendas of urban construction, and the active engagement of diverse populations in public spaces. Novel modes of urban conceptualization and planning, new notions of scale and expanse provided sites of encounter and action, some introducing, as in the case of coffeehouses, new habits of sociability. The three capitals where such modes of early modern urbanity took life allow us to expand the study of urban history of this era beyond its Eurocentric historiography. Just as Versailles and Paris were pendants of an imperial agenda of centralization, so were Edirne and Istanbul of the Ottomans, Qazvin and Isfahan of the Safavids, and Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, Lahore and Delhi of the Mughals. Similarly in these diverse realms corporate elites and denizens would mark their claims on the spaces of the city in cooperative, conflicted, and competitive modes of participation in urban and political life.

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34

Painting, from Royal to Urban Patronage

Emine Fetvacı and Christiane Gruber

During the early modern period, paintings were often linked to other modes of creative communication, in particular the narration of epic, romantic, religious tales and historical accounts. While images were made to adorn the walls of palaces and the surfaces of portable objects, they most frequently belonged to the realm of book production. Within illustrated manuscripts and albums, paintings could illustrate a story, interpret it, and symbolically expand it in a number of ways by enabling their audiences, both royal and nonroyal, to lay claim to a cultural heritage, glorify a common past, or comment upon contemporary events.

With the emergence of the Ottoman (*c.* 1299–1922), Safavid (1501–1736), and Mughal (1526–1857) empires, dynastic styles of painting and book arts were consciously developed. Individuals and manuscripts traveled from one atelier, workshop, library, city, and owner to the next, in the process fostering interconnectedness between artistic traditions across Islamic lands. The mobility of artists and manuscripts created shared literary and artistic traditions within Turko-Persianate cultural spheres that, despite divergences, largely drew upon the Turkmen–Timurid legacy of the fifteenth century, which itself had elaborated upon Mongol–Ilkhanid precedents of the fourteenth century. The result was an even more interrelated cultural universe shared across the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.

Many of the works on paper produced between *c.* 1450 and 1650 were created and stored in a workshop or library known as a *kitabkhana* (literally, book house or library-cum-workshop), and, in the Ottoman and Mughal contexts, a *naqqashkhana* (literally, house of painter-designers). Archival documents suggest that most royal households, along with select nonroyal patrons, regularly had

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artists and designers in their employ (Bağcı *et al.* 2010; Seyller 1999; Thackston 2001). Albums, treatises, and other workshop materials also shed light on the production process, although many questions still remain unanswered (Roxburgh 2001, 2005).

Oftentimes, calligraphers and painter-designers worked in a specific space set aside for them. Yet it was also possible for artists and calligraphers based in or traveling to different physical locations to produce a manuscript with artistic cohesion. In some contexts, the workshop could be an ad hoc institution, coming together for specific projects. Moreover, most manuscripts were the result of collaborative processes, produced by artisans working under the supervision of a workshop director, author, calligrapher, or artist (Fetvacı 2013; Seyller 2002; Simpson 1982). The number of freelance artists working for an open market increased towards the end of the sixteenth century, a shift that slowly but surely affected the subject matter of artistic production (Canby 2000; Roxburgh 2005). With the growth of new classes of patrons, the making and collecting of paintings thus went from a largely royal prerogative to a more widespread urban phenomenon during the early modern period.

Scholarship on early modern Islamic painting has addressed a number of these issues, including the mobility of artists and the rise of nonroyal products. Previous methods of inquiry involved the practice of connoisseurship, often used to explore the aesthetic qualities of art forms and to identify the hands of particular "master" artists. They also tended to emphasize (supposedly discreet) painterly schools that practiced in specific cities at particular times. In addition, painting styles were – and have remained – studied along ethno-linguistic lines, with a much greater emphasis placed on Persian painting to the detriment of Mughal, Central Asian, and Ottoman pictorial practices.

Building upon more recent scholarship, this chapter approaches a broad corpus of materials by using newer methods and approaches, including attention to the material and aesthetic qualities of books and paintings as well as the links between artists and paintings across time and geography. It also highlights the many ways in which diverse painters and patrons adopted the Timurid legacy, adapting it while also experimenting with new genres and styles at a moment in time when art historical consciousness echoed and sustained articulations of political, cultural, and religious identity and authority across the Islamic world.

Epic and Romantic Tales

The most popular works of literature from the Islamic world are without a doubt the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), written at the turn of the eleventh century by the poet Firdawsi, and the *Khamsa* (Quintet), penned by the poet Nizami (d. 1209) during the following century. These epic and romantic tales were complemented by a variety of texts written by other masters of pre-modern literature in Persian and Turkish. However, Firdawsi's and Nizami's works were the most frequently illustrated with paintings.

Pictorial images belonging to both epic and romantic tales could make use of a number of formal and iconographic motifs to amplify their visual appeal. The fact that paintings often belonged to larger image cycles – rather than being produced as single, unconnected units – helped provide a sustained visual experience for readers of illustrated books. With compositional tropes well established by 1450, narrative paintings could be recognized by viewers familiar with a number of recurring images. So well known were these thematic motifs that, for example, paintings of the royal warrior Bahram Gur slaying a dragon or an emaciated and love-stricken Majnun in the wilderness could almost forego written explanation.

To a large degree, the thematic choices and formal appearances of epic and romantic paintings were codified in Iran and Central Asia over the course of the fifteenth century. Under Timurid patronage, the *kitabkhana* became further centralized and staffed by calligraphers as well as artists, who produced increasingly unified and cohesive pictorial themes and styles by creatively synthesizing Ilkhanid, Jalayirid, and Muzaffarid prototypes. Painters and works of art were brought together in *kitabkhana*s to create new illustrated manuscripts, albums, and multimedia objects that preserved and invigorated previous traditions of figurative and nonfigurative image-making.

Although a number of illustrated *Shahnama*s, *Khamsa*s, and other compendia of poems were made in royally sponsored *kitabkhana*s during the first half of the fifteenth century for Timurid and Turkmen princes, the output of illustrated manuscripts of epic and romantic tales increased substantially after 1450. Poetry and painting greatly benefited from the royal patronage of the Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506) and his enlightened vizier, the poet Mir ʿAli Shir Navaʾi, in Herat. Also active in their immediate environs were the Naqshbandi Sufi poet Jami and the painter Bihzad, both key contributors to late Timurid Herati elite culture, arts, and letters. Illustrated manuscripts of poetic texts reflecting this milieu include a *Bustan* (Garden) of Saʿdi (1488). While paintings from other contemporaneous manuscripts are attributed to Bihzad, only this manuscript includes the artist's signature (Bahari 1996). Nonetheless, a Bihzadian style can be detected in paintings belonging to the late Timurid period. This "new" style has been considered as reforming and synthesizing – rather than revolutionizing – Persianate painting. It is also described as replete with formal conventions and more "realistic" depictions of the physical world (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 285–292; Roxburgh 2000).

Bihzad was deemed a master painter deserving of lavish patronage under the late Timurids and was subsequently appointed to the directorship of the royal book atelier in Tabriz during the early years of Safavid rule. Within just a few decades of his death, both Uzbek Shaybanid and Mughal rulers in Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent displayed a keen interest in collecting exemplars of his oeuvre, to which they added laudatory explanations and attributive notes.

Like a brand name, Bihzad thus functioned as a kind of collective embodiment of the superlative aesthetic of late Timurid painting.

As Bihzad became a collectible item, his collaborations and "true" authorship were of limited interest or consequence for collectors of artworks (Roxburgh 2000: 125). As a result, the Bihzadian "style" – whether real or imagined – spread well beyond Iran to Central Asia, India, and Ottoman lands. There, it helped to increasingly valorize Timurid culture, to which many royal actors sought to lay claim in order to advance their own political and cultural agendas (see Golombek and Koch, CHAPTER 32).

Under the Safavids, a number of illustrated epic and romantic tales were produced, no doubt to help promote the emergent Sufi–Shiʿi rulers as legitimate dynasts ruling over Iran. The Safavids' claim to Persian-ness was supported by their patronage of Firdawsi's *Shahnama*, the epic book of the kings of Iran and Turan (Central Asia). A lavishly illustrated copy of the *Shahnama* was produced *c.* 1525–1530 for Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576). This royal *Shahnama* is arguably the most luxurious copy of Firdawsi's epic ever made (Dickson and Welch 1981). Its 258 paintings display a mastery of the craft of painting. For example, in the depiction of Isfandiyar slaying a dragon, the composition breaks through the frame on the right, encircling and thus emphasizing Isfandiyar's wheeled chariot (Figure 34.1). The royal protagonist confronts a snarling dragon that appears to disintegrate into a rocky outcrop on the left. In the background, soldiers on horseback and a foot attendant wearing the Safavid *taj-i Haydari* (Twelver Shiʿi headgear) observe the scene below, seemingly discussing the event and reacting to it with awe. These figures are most certainly included to help the painting's beholders focus their gaze upon, and react emotionally to, the main event depicted in the center of the composition.

Although the only reliable information about the manuscript are the date 934 (1527–1528) and two signatures of artists (Mir Musavvir and Dost Muhammad), scholars have expended great efforts to identify the hands of Safavid artists whose names are recorded in other manuscripts or in Safavid art historical literature (Dickson and Welch 1981). Identifying a particular artist's hand, however, is a relatively futile exercise given the fact that many illustrated manuscripts were created by teams of artists working on different aspects and parts of the paintings at the same time.

Shah Tahmasp sent his illustrated copy of the *Shahnama* as a present to the Ottoman court in 1567, to celebrate the accession of Selim II (r. 1566–1574) to the throne. Although it had no stylistic impact on later Ottoman painting, the manuscript was highly valued at the Ottoman court (Rüstem 2012). During the Safavid period, illustrated copies of the *Shahnama* continued to be produced for both royal and nonroyal patrons, and often both the text and its paintings could help laud contemporary rulers.

Beyond epic texts, Sufi allegorical expressions of love and longing were a staple of Persian poetical works composed by Nizami, Hafiz (d. 1389), and Jami (d. 1492). Without a doubt, Nizami's *Khamsa* continued to be a favored text for production

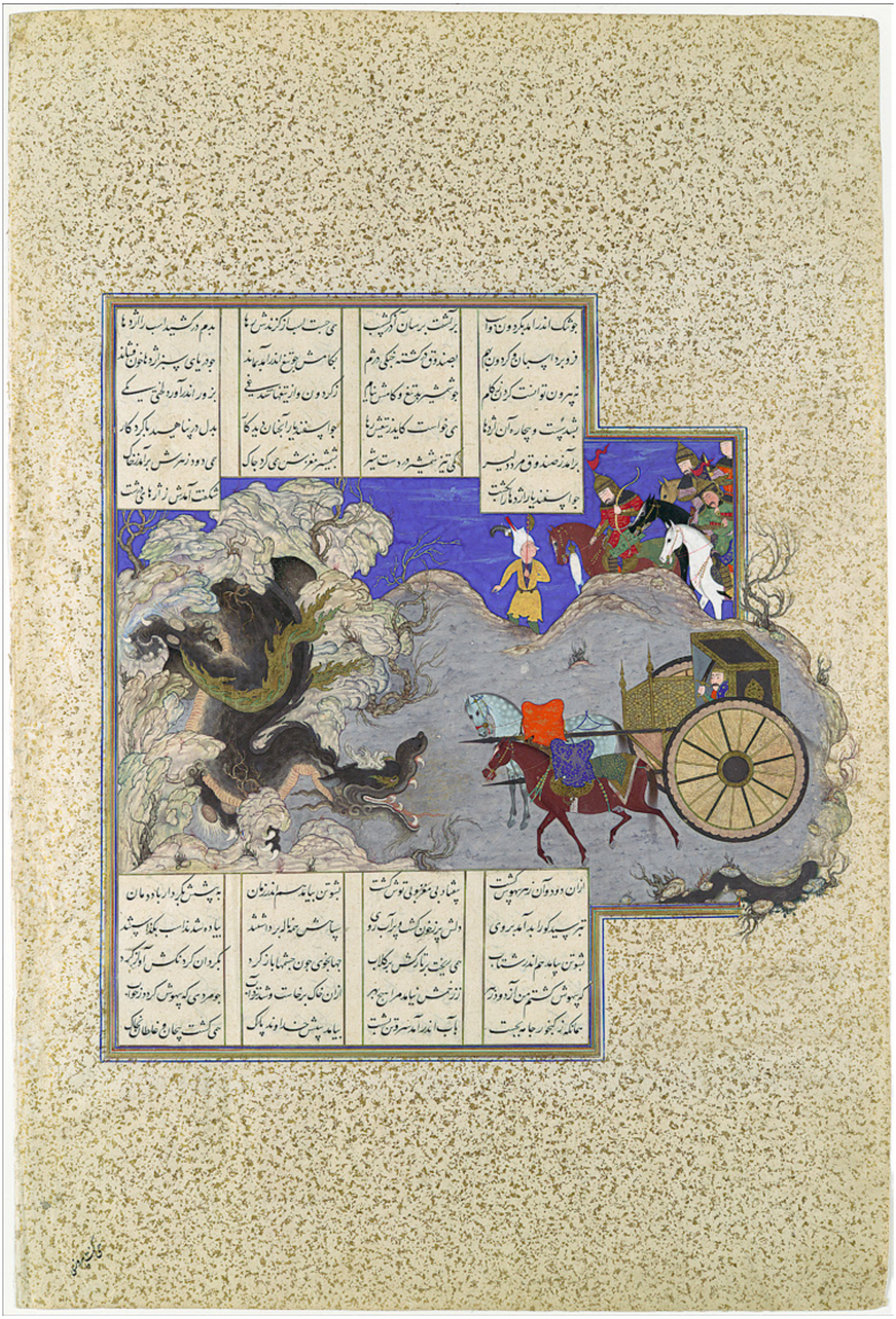


FIGURE 34.1 Isfandiyar slays a dragon, from a *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, produced for Shah Tahmasp, Tabriz, Iran *c.* 1530. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1970.301.51/Art Resource, NY. Reproduced with permission.

and preservation: for instance, one illustrated manuscript of the *Khamsa* was started by the Timurids, continued by Turkmen rulers, and completed by the Safavids, revealing that its successive owners held it in the highest of esteem and therefore wished to ensure the completion of its pictorial program (Canby 2000: 17; Lentz and Lowry 1989: 244–249). To some extent, such diachronic contributions to Persianate book arts transcend the notion of autonomous and synchronic stylistic "schools," highlighting instead a transtemporal and multiregional artistic network bound by cultural and artistic connections. Moreover, such contributions also demonstrate that illustrated manuscripts – much like the calligraphers and painters who produced them – could be peripatetic. This kind of artistic "movement" is especially the case for an illustrated *Haft Awrang* (Seven Thrones), a mystical poem composed by Jami, which was penned by five calligraphers in three cities from 1556 to 1565 and whose full-sheet paintings were later assembled and bound into this "mail-order" manuscript (Simpson 1982). Manuscripts thus crossed time and space, their paintings adopting and adapting inherited pictorial conventions.

While some epic and romantic works such as the *Khamsa* of ʿAli Shir Navaʾi or the *Khusraw and Shirin* of Hatifi were illustrated at the Ottoman court in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the Ottomans later came to prefer Safavid manuscripts produced for an open market in the city of Shiraz. A small number of illustrated Ottoman Turkish translations of the *Shahnama* were produced during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Bağcı *et al.* 2010: 41–56, 216–219; Uluç 2006). The efforts of Ottoman workshops in Istanbul, especially after the second half of the sixteenth century, focused more on the illustration of histories, genealogies, geographies, poetic anthologies, religious subjects, and cosmological books on the wonders of creation (Fetvacı 2013).

Mughal patrons commissioned numerous illustrated romances as well. Persian classics were especially favored at the court of Akbar (r. 1556–1605). Perhaps the most unusual among these is the *Hamzanama*, the heroic tales of Hamza, which conflate a certain Hamza ibn ʿAbd Allah of the ninth century with the Prophet Muhammad's uncle Hamza (Seyller 2002: 12–13). The *Hamzanama* was produced not as a bound book but a collection of approximately 1200 large sheets (*c.* 69 cm × 54 cm) with a painting on one side and text on the other. These were probably enjoyed in a group setting, with an attendant holding up a page and another reading the text on one side while viewers enjoyed the image on the other (Seyller 2002: 41–43). The project attests to the links between oral performances of literature and the illustrated book, reminding us that many times these works of literature were recited or read out loud in a group setting.

Dynastic and Universal Histories

The verbal and visual recording of the past was a significant concern for early modern empires in the Islamic world. As with many aspects of book art traditions of this period, illustrated histories also emerged from Ilkhanid and Timurid precedents. The deployment of dynastic history to promote current political concerns became an especially significant trend. The writing of Mughal dynastic history begins with the *Baburnama* (Book of Babur), the extraordinary autobiography of Babur (r. 1526–1530), the first Mughal emperor. Babur's grandson Akbar requested the memoirs translated from their original Chaghatai Turkish into Persian, the new poetic language of the increasingly Persianized Mughal court. Soon thereafter, he also commissioned illustrated copies of the text (Beach 1987). Additionally, Akbar commissioned Indian Sanskrit classics such as the *Ramayana* (Rama's Journey) translated into Persian and provided with paintings (Seyller 1999). This and other Hindu epics must have catered to members of Akbar's court, who were of varied ethnic and religious backgrounds. Sponsoring a corpus of books that fused the various cultural traditions of the Mughal court was surely advantageous for consolidating Akbar's rule. Such patronage could provide symbolic cohesion insofar as it could aid in creating an imperial, supra-ethnic, and multireligious identity for a rather heterogeneous courtly environment (Koch 2002).

The illustrated account of Akbar's own reign, the three-volume *Akbarnama*, commissioned by the monarch in 1590–1591 from his courtier and vizier Abu'l-Fazl, must be understood within this context (Beach 1987: 112–138). The first volume includes accounts of Chinggis Khan and Timur, establishing a noble Turko–Mongol pedigree for Akbar as a source of legitimacy.

An *Akbarnama* illustration shows Akbar's father Humayun (r. 1530–1540, 1555–1556) at the court of Shah Tahmasp, where he had taken refuge in 1544 after losing his throne (Figure 34.2). Humayun, seated on the left, is easily identifiable by his Mughal headgear. Across from him sits the Safavid monarch, wearing the *taj-i Haydari*. The painting's style fuses Persianate, Indian, and European elements, a synthesis that resulted from the composition of Akbar's *kitabkhana*, which was staffed by artists of different regions (India, Iran, and Central Asia) and religious affiliations (Hindu, Jain, and Muslim). Akbar's court workshop, which grew from the core of Safavid artists who had emigrated from Tabriz under Humayun, also included European (especially Dutch, English, and even Portuguese) artists (Bailey 2001: 112–143; Beach 1987: 51–96). Eventually, the imperial Mughal style would be refined even further by artists working for Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) and Shah Jahan (r. 1627–1658), reaching an apogee with the highly formalized, codified images of the *Padshahnama* of 1638, which recorded and lavishly illustrated the reign of Shah Jahan (Beach, Koch, and Thackston 1997).

The Safavids, too, were interested in the writing of history and therefore commissioned written accounts of their dynasty. Yet the majority of Safavid historical texts were not illustrated during the sixteenth century. This may be because the Safavids' political claims were not as longstanding as those of the Ottomans, who had ruled since the late thirteenth century, or the Mughals, who were descendants of the Timurids. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, however,

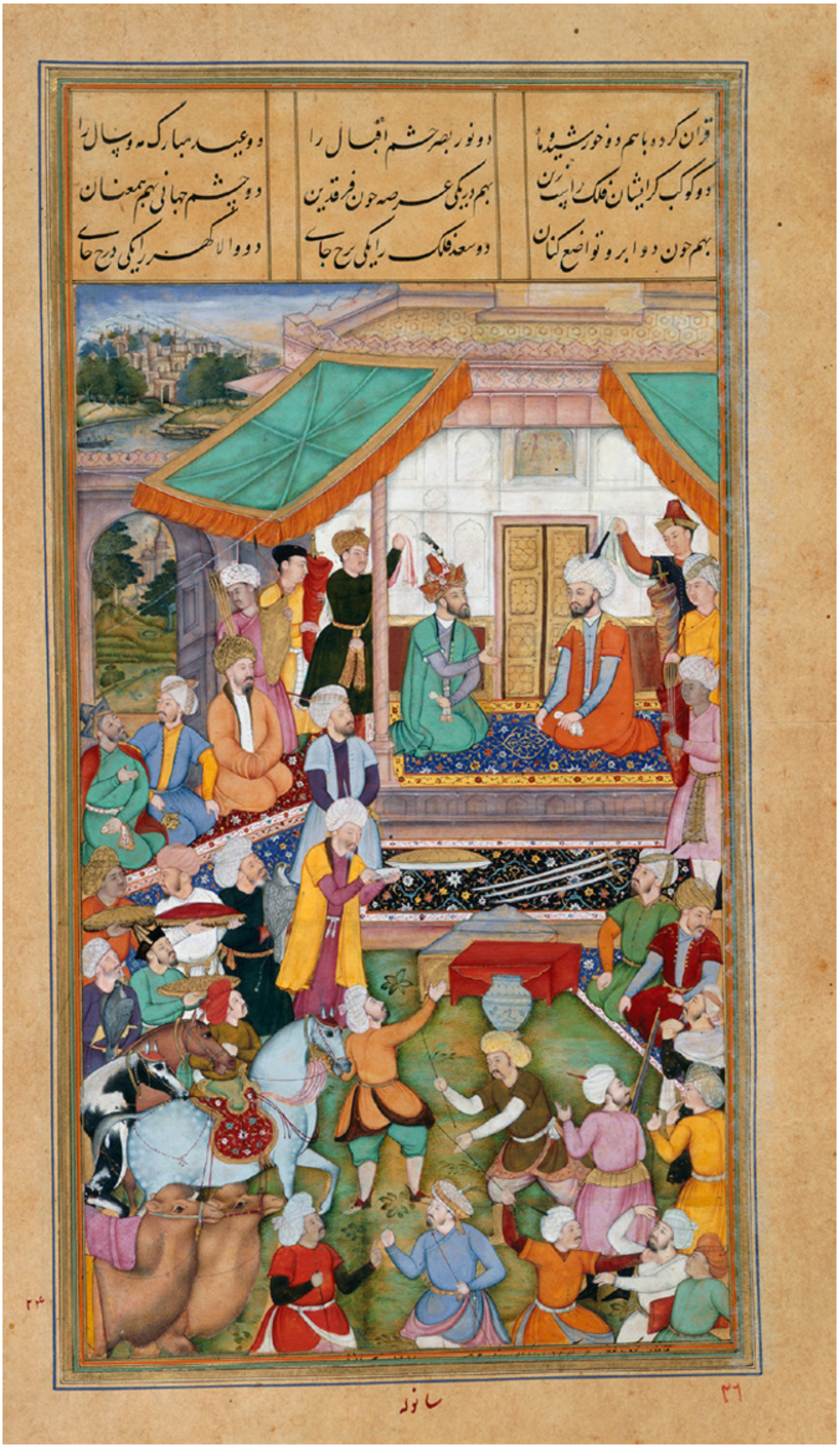

قران کرده باهم دو خورشید و ماه
دو کوکب گرایشان فلک را زینت
بهم چون دو ابرو تواضع کنان
دو نور بصر چشم اقبال را
بهم در یکی عرصه چون فرقدین
دو سعد فلک را یکی برج جای
دو عید مبارک مه و سال را
دو چشم جهانی بهم همعنان
دو والا گهر را یکی درج جای
٢٣
سانوله
٣٦

FIGURE 34.2 Humayun with Shah Tahmasp, by Sanwlah, from the *Akbarnama* of Abu'l-Fazl, Mughal, 1603–1604. Source: British Library, London, Or. 12988, fol. 98r. Reproduced with permission.

Safavid dynastic histories came to be illustrated (Melville 2011), perhaps serving as a symbolic means to reassert Safavid hegemony under the increasing threat of Uzbek incursions. Despite this, the Safavid rulers did not place the same priority on this genre as their Mughal and Ottoman counterparts did.

The Ottomans began producing illustrated histories in the fifteenth century. Production intensified after artists and manuscripts arrived in Istanbul from Tabriz, following the Ottoman sultan Selim I's victory over Shah Isma'il I at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 (Bağcı *et al.*, 2010: 20–32, 48–50, 90–97). Ottoman universal and dynastic histories were first written in Persian verse, in the same meter and rhyme scheme as Firdawsi's *Shahnama*. Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–1566) was the first to appoint a court official known as the *şehnameci*, or *shahnama* writer. Among them, ʿArifi composed a *Shahnama-i Al-i ʿOsman* (Book of Kings of the House of Osman) in Persian verse, produced as an illustrated universal history in five volumes. It begins with the tales of Old Testament prophets and *Shahnama* heroes, continues into the Ottoman period, and culminates in an account of Sultan Süleyman's reign in the final volume, entitled the *Sulaymannama* (Book of Süleyman) (Atıl 1986).

By the end of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans no longer commissioned official histories in Persian, preferring Ottoman Turkish texts. They also developed a distinctive visual idiom that could easily be identified as Ottoman and thus was sufficiently different from Safavid and Mughal styles. The production of illustrated dynastic histories reached its peak under Murad III (r. 1574–1595), whose reign overlapped with that of Akbar in India and Shah ʿAbbas I in Iran. Murad III's court historian Seyyid Lokman worked to please not only the sultan but also other courtiers as he turned to writing histories of the Ottoman dynasty. Some of these works create parallels between Ottoman dynasts and heroes from the *Shahnama* by depicting the sultans enacting the feats of legendary heroes (Bağcı 2009). Others, such as the *Shahanshahnama* (Book of the King of Kings) in Persian verse, present a composite image of a just and pious ruler who manifests power through his governors and commanders (Figure 34.3). These manuscripts record the lives of Ottoman courtiers, and indeed were often commissioned or supervised by members of the court, thereby presenting idealized visions of their place in the social hierarchy of the palace (Fetvacı 2013).

The painting in Figure 34.3 depicts the Ottoman vizier Ibrahim Pasha taking his leave from Murad III at the Topkapı Palace as he departs for his post in Cairo as governor of Egypt. The right side of this double-page composition depicts the sultan seated on his throne, meeting with the pasha in a quiet, isolated audience as the inhabitants of the palace wait in the lower part of the page, which represents the second, administrative, courtyard of the palace. The military might of the empire is displayed on the left page, with the army that will accompany the pasha, arranged in perfect order. The style of depiction, which deliberately creates an aura of stability and majesty with the utmost attention paid to hierarchical order, contrasts with the dynamic interactions of figures in the *Akbarnama*'s audience scene (Figure 34.2).

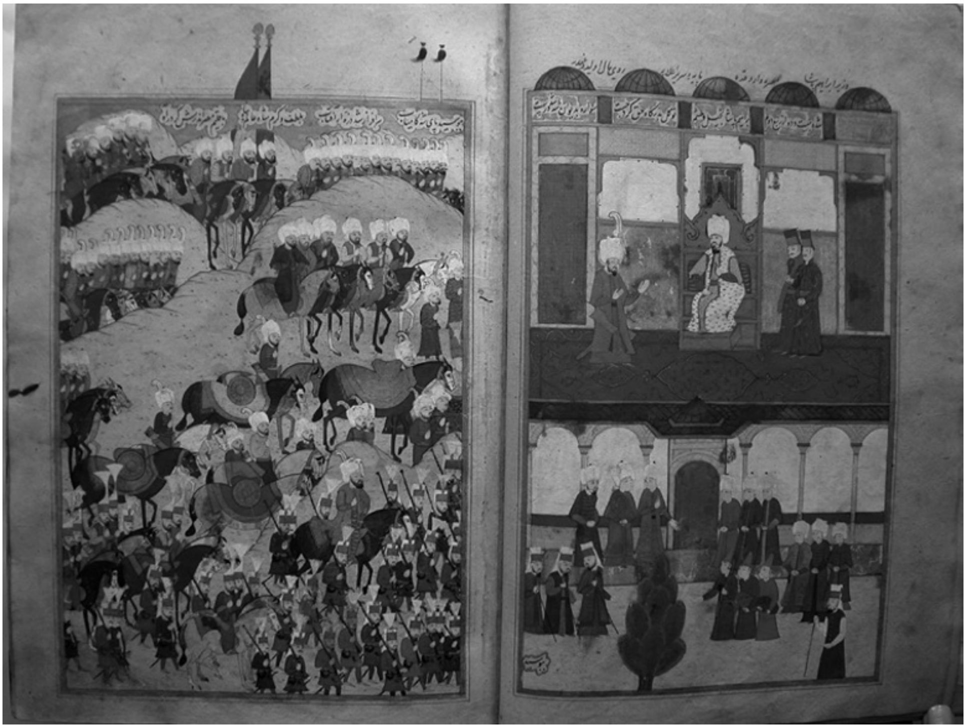


Figure 34.3 Sultan Murad III giving audience to Ibrahim Pasha who is about to leave Istanbul for his post as governor of Egypt in Cairo, from the *Shahanshanama* of Seyyid Lokman, Ottoman, 1592–1598. Source: Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, B 200, fols. 95v–96r. Reproduced with permission.

Other Ottoman histories, like Lokman's Turkish-language *Zübdetü'ʾt-tevarih* (Quintessence of Histories) of 1583, present the Ottoman sultans within the greater context of Islamic history, as the successors of the Turko-Mongol dynasties and the upholders of the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad and the four rightly guided caliphs. Finally, a number of Ottoman illustrated histories also functioned as pictorial genealogies and books of individualized royal portraiture, which were often overlaid with religious discourses (Kangal 2000: 22–61, 188–201).

Religious Themes

In the past, scholars of Islamic art deemed Islamic painting largely a "secular" tradition. However, religious works have received increased scholarly attention over the past two decades (Gruber 2008; Milstein, Rührdanz, and Schmitz 1999). This genre rose to prominence in the early modern period, with the aim of describing or teaching systems of faith. At times, illustrated religious texts also sought to promote a sectarian worldview. Paintings with religious themes thus contributed to larger efforts to delineate identities for Turko-Persian elite and urban audiences between 1450 and 1650, a time of increasing cultural, political, and religious differentiation across the Islamic world.

Emanating primarily (but not exclusively) from royal or princely ateliers, religious texts and their paintings did not comprise an entirely separate branch of book arts. To the contrary, they were linked to other literary products, particularly epic tales and universal histories. Much like the movement of manuscripts from Iran and Central Asia to Ottoman and Mughal lands, literary genres proved quite mobile and open-ended. For instance, a religiously edifying tale might be depicted in an epic style, while a dynastic history might promote a particular devotional system or faith group. The fluidity between these literary and visual products reveals the extent to which they overlapped in both thematic content and artistic mode.

Persian religious painting after 1450 did not emerge without precedent. Its roots can be traced back to the book arts of the Ilkhanids. A number of illustrated histories and biographies containing religious messages and imagery seem to have assisted in the formulation of a Muslim identity for the Mongol rulers of Iran. Interest in the Prophet Muhammad's life and miracles, along with the history and tenets of Islam, continued into the Timurid period as well. For instance, the Timurid sultan Shahrukh's *Majmaʿ al-tawarikh* (Compendium of History) of *c.* 1425 includes a number of paintings depicting major events in the Prophet Muhammad's life, including his birth and celestial ascent (Gruber 2018). The latter miraculous event in the Prophet's career was of such significance that two Timurid illustrated *Miʿrajnama*s (Book of Ascension) were commissioned by Shahrukh and his successor Abu Saʿid around the mid-fifteenth century, drawing upon and expanding an earlier Ilkhanid prototype (Gruber 2008, 2010).

Although these kinds of manuscripts were restricted to a ruler's immediate entourage, they nevertheless helped create narratives and images that contributed to the formulation of a rhetoric promoting an elite group's politico-religious ascendancy. During the first two decades of the sixteenth century, sectarian verbalizations of dynastic authority in the Islamic world reached a high point. For example, upon his accession to the throne in Tabriz in 1501, the first Safavid monarch Shah Ismaʿil I (r. 1501–1524) declared Twelver Shiʿism the official religion of Iran, while the Battle of Chaldiran further strengthened the Safavid–Ottoman political divide. Another fault line emerged between the Safavids and the Sunni Shaybanids based in Uzbek Central Asia. Moreover, as the *hijri* year 1000 (1591) approached, the millenarian expectation of the Apocalypse and the occult arts flourished as well. For these reasons, scenes of the last judgment, heaven, and hell abound in Safavid and Ottoman illustrated *Falnama*s (Book of Omens), whose large-scale paintings and texts provided auguries to their inquiring viewers (Farhad and Bağcı 2009).

In Ottoman lands, the turn of the millennium also heralded the production of illustrated prognosticative texts replete with paintings of the Ottoman sultans alongside depictions of the Messiah (Mahdi), the Anti-Christ (Dajjal), and Jesus. In some cases, including the illustrated Turkish-language *Miftah el-Cifrü'l-Camiʿ* (Key to Esoteric Knowledge), paintings of the long-awaited Messiah are hard to distinguish from depictions of Ottoman dynasts, as found within historical narratives (Fetvacı 2013). The ownership of prognosticative books by princesses of the royal house as well as members of the court attests to the widespread interest in the occult sciences and their intersections with other arts produced at the Ottoman court (Farhad and Bağcı 2009).

Over the course of the sixteenth century, paintings promoting the Muslim faith and/or a particular kind of spiritual identity tended to be folded within the pictorial programs of Safavid and Ottoman universal histories. Unlike Mughal dynastic histories such as the *Akbarnama*, which located the life and deeds of their dynasts in the context of Turko-Mongol history, Safavid and Ottoman universal histories offered larger narratives of world history, stretching back to the beginnings of time via anterior Islamic dynasties, the beginnings of Islam, and ancient history. Within such historical manuscripts, paintings of the life of Muhammad – along with that of his companions and the imams – provided Ottoman and Safavid political actors with opportunities to shape and lay claim to the legacy of Islam at the same time as they created spiritual lineages for themselves.

These stemmas could be further exploited within illustrated biographies of the Prophet Muhammad, whose symbolic role in sectarian contentions, though not new, certainly gained traction in book arts. In his quest to serve as the *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith) prophesized for the millennium, in 1594–1595 Murad III commissioned a six-volume illustrated biography of the Prophet Muhammad in Turkish, based on Darir's *Siyer-i Nebi* (Biography of the Prophet), written in Mamluk Cairo *c.* 1388 (Tanındı 1984). Commissioning this lavishly illustrated manuscript was a pious act, and it may have been used for the education of Ottoman princes and palace circles. The paintings depict the Prophet and his entourage in an Ottomanized setting, bringing Muhammad's life story in close proximity to that of the viewers. The emotional power of the paintings is suggested by the viewers' evident interactions with the painted images. In one depiction, for example, Muhammad's opponent, Abu Jahl, is shown attempting to kill the Prophet by hurling a rock when the latter was praying at the Kaʿba (Figure 34.4). Abu Jahl's murder attempt is miraculously foiled in the textual narrative. He is likewise halted in the painting, where the pious viewer's iconoclastic act – that is, his wiping out Abu Jahl with the flick of a wet thumb – seeks to obliterate not figural imagery per se, but rather the representational image of Muhammad's lifelong enemy.

Numerous copies of the *Qisas al-anbiya'* (Stories of the Prophets), which catered to a broad consumership that included Turkmen governors and Ottoman collectors (Uluç 2006), were produced during the second half of the sixteenth

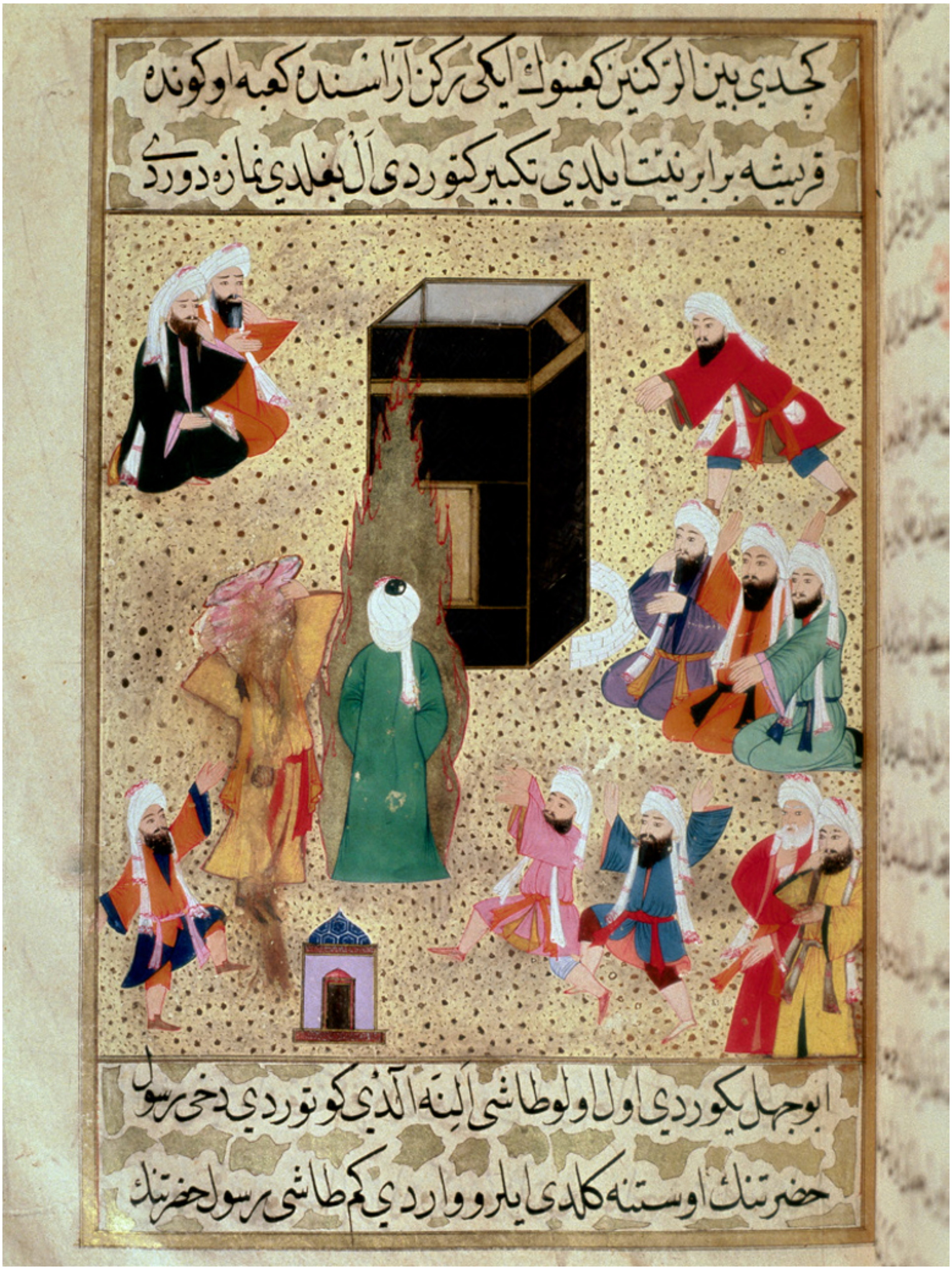

کچدی بین الرکنین کعبنوك ایکی رکن آراسنده کعبه او کونده
قریشه برابر نیت ایلدی تکبیر کتوردی ال باغلدی نمازه دوردی
ابوجهل یکوردی اول اولو طاشی الینه آلدی کوتوردی دخی رسول
حضرتنك اوستنه کلدی ایلرو واردی کیم طاشی رسول حضرتنك

FIGURE 34.4 Abu Jahl (smeared) attempting to hurl a stone onto the Prophet Muhammad at the Kaʿba, from *Siyer-i Nebi* of Darir, Istanbul, 1594–1595. Source: Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1222, fol. 366r. Reproduced with permission.

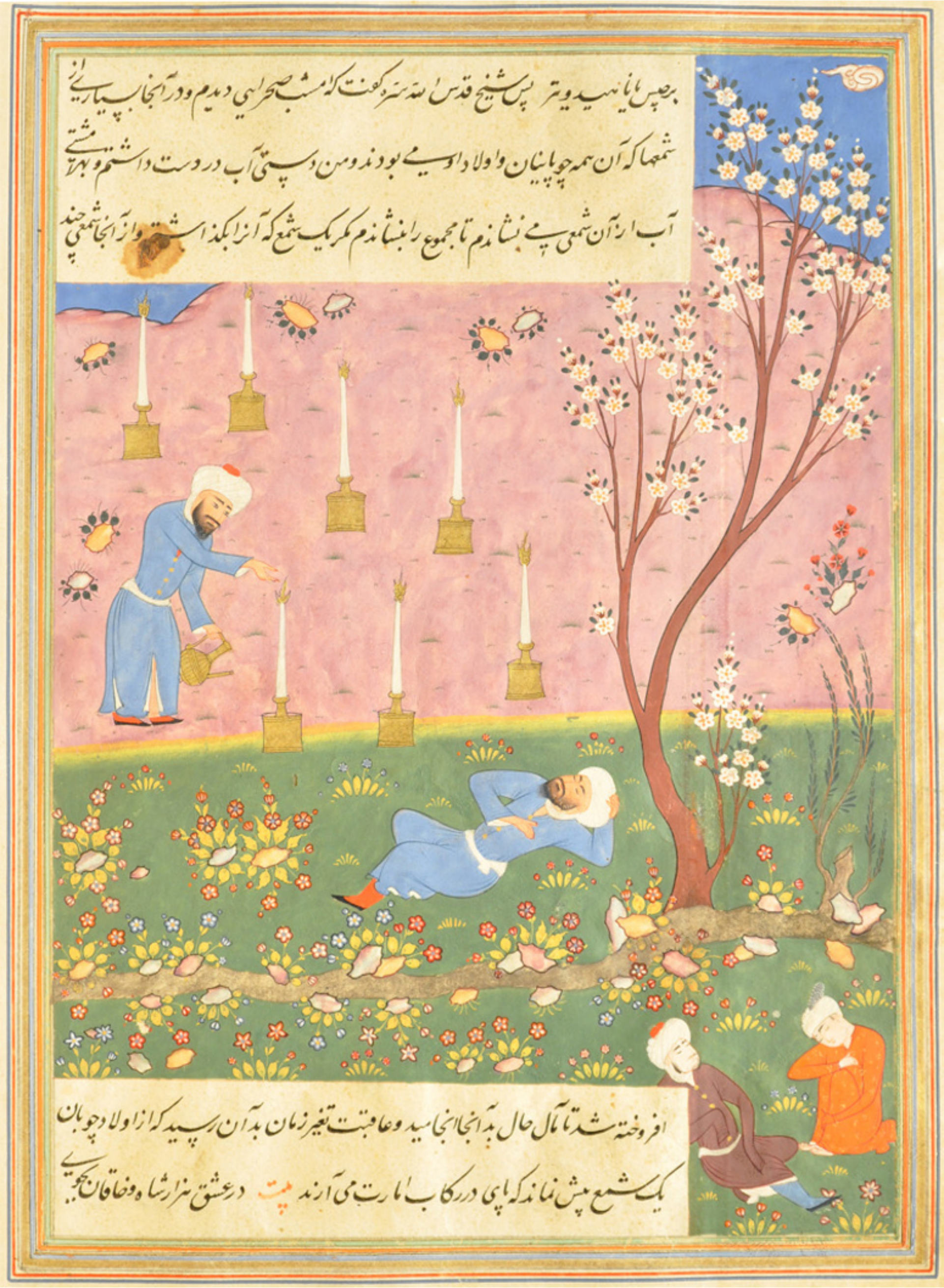
century (Milstein, Rührdanz, and Schmitz 1999). These can be considered largely a form of nonsectarian religious literature, whose textual and pictorial components could appeal to a broad swath of viewers, for whom these more "commercial" materials were intended in the first instance.

Whereas Ottoman religious paintings tend to promote the Sunni cause, within Safavid Iran a number of texts with religious imagery show clear Shiʿi leanings. The Shiʿi bio-historical genre was patronized by various classes of patrons outside the major metropolitan centers of the Safavid Empire. An illustrated copy of Ibn Bazzaz's *Safwat al-Safa* (The Quintessence of Purity), a hagiography of Shaykh Safi al-Din (d. 1334), the eponymous founder of the Safavid dynasty, is a case in point. Only one illustrated copy dated 1582 remains extant today (Erkmen 2017). The original text describes the Sufi saint as having been prophesized by the Prophet Muhammad and as capable of performing miracles. Its revised edition ordered in 1533 by Shah Tahmasp includes more explicitly Shiʿi elements as well as an expanded genealogy tracing Safi al-Din's pedigree back to Imam ʿAli. Among several depictions of miracles in the manuscript, one painting depicts Safi al-Din's dream of the Chupanids, who seized power from the Ilkhanids (Figure 34.5). The painting is divided into two registers: in the lower horizontal, the shaykh reclines outdoors while he dreams of walking past lit candles, shown in the painting's upper section. These candles represent the Chupanids and their descendants, whose line of rule Safi al-Din extinguishes one by one thanks to a jug of water he carries in his hands. Last but not least, this painting displays the symbolic intersections between visions and reality within Persianate pictorial traditions, a form of dream and allegorical imagery that became most fully articulated within Mughal traditions of royal portraiture after 1600.

Albums and the Perpetuation of Artistic Legacies

While many paintings produced in Islamic lands between 1450 and 1650 were intended to illustrate books, some were made independently from texts and were destined for inclusion in albums. The Arabic and Persian word for album is *muraqqaʿ*, which literally means "patched." The term most likely refers to a "patched garment" or robe worn by Sufi mystics as a sign of humility. Oftentimes albums are indeed composites since they assemble a variety of paintings, drawings, illuminations, and calligraphies made in different places and times (Roxburgh 2005: viii; Wright 2008: 41). As such, albums are essentially collections that can be thought of as portable art treasuries contained between the covers of a book.

Albums frequently display an overarching logic of organization, which could highlight a genealogy of practitioners, a specific style of calligraphy, or works by artists of a particular generation or atelier. Because the internal conceptual structure is not always explained by the album compiler, art historians of earlier generations assumed that albums were similar to scrapbooks in which any old



برحسب بانهید وتر پس شیخ قدس الله سره گفت که امشب صحرایی دیدم و در آنجا بسیاری از
شمعها که آن همه چوپانیان و اولاد او بودند و من دستی آب در دست داشتم و بهر مشتی
آب از آن شمعی می‌نشاندم تا مجموع را بنشاندم مگر یک شمع که آن را بگذاشتم و از آنجا شمعی چند
افروخته شد تا مآل حال بدانجا انجامید و عاقبت تغیر زمان بدان رسید که از اولاد چوپان
یک شمع بیش نماند که پای در رکاب امارت می آرند بیت در عشق هزار شاه و خاقان بجوی

Figure 34.5 Shaykh Safi al-Din's dream of the political downfall of the Chupanids, *Safwat al-Safa* of Ibn Bazzaz, Shiraz, Iran, 1582. Source: Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Ms. 264, fol. 159v. Reproduced with permission.

item could be collected and preserved. However, as David Roxburgh's scholarship has made abundantly clear, most albums do indeed follow some form of internal logic, even if that logic is not as obvious to modern-day viewers as it might have been to the albums' original audiences. Not just haphazard amalgams, albums have much to reveal about their makers' and owners' conceptual contributions to narratives concerned with the history of Islamic calligraphic and artistic practices.

The making of albums appears to have begun in Timurid courtly spheres during the early 1400s. Political rivalry between the Timurid princes was expressed as cultural competition, with a noticeable upsurge in artistic patronage. Timurid courtiers prided themselves on their cultural refinement and often gathered in assemblies (*majalis*, sing. *majlis*) to discuss and compare poetic and artistic works. In such settings, literature, calligraphy, and the painterly arts played a noticeable role in courtly interactions. This lively social environment must have encouraged the organization of comparative materials into albums, which could perhaps be passed around, shown, and discussed within a group setting (Roxburgh 2005: 24–30; Subtelny 1984).

The Timurid courts also hosted workshops where designs for a variety of media were prepared in centralized locations. Not infrequently, the vestiges of the design process were collected into albums as visible memorials of the artists who worked at a certain court (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 159–236; Roxburgh 2005: 85–147). In preserving a miscellany of materials – such as sketches, pounces, and decorated papers – albums could also function as model books for practitioners while offering elite patrons a tangible allegory of the artistic process itself.

After the end of the fifteenth century, a number of albums were prefaced by art historical texts (Roxburgh 2001; Thackston 2001). Some prefaces hint at the album's logic of organization and its place within larger narratives of Islamic artistic production and historiography, which in some cases are noticeably entangled with political and religious concerns. A concurrent and related development was the increasingly frequent inclusion of biographies of poets, calligraphers, and artists in historical works. Such practitioners were deemed so significant that a number of authors dedicated entire works to recording their contributions to the arts and letters. The Safavid author Qazi Ahmad's *Gulistan-i Hunar* (Rose Garden of Art, 1596–1606) and the Ottoman polymath Mustafa ʿAli's *Menakıb-ı Hünerveran* (Epic Deeds of Artists, 1587–1588) are among the best known (Minorsky 1959; Akın 2011). Along with album prefaces, these biographical compendia present art historical notions and narratives in the early modern Persianate world.

Because of its highly detailed art historical preface, the most carefully studied Safavid album is that produced by Dost Muhammad for the Safavid prince Bahram Mirza (1517–1549). The preface sketches a history of Islamic calligraphy and Persian painting that delineates a continuous chain of master and pupil artists. In his narrative about calligraphy, Dost Muhammad engages with a Shiʿi-Iranian discourse typical of the Safavid period. In his section on painting, he likewise promotes an unbroken stemma linking Ilkhanid painters and their Jalayirid and

Timurid successors to Safavid practitioners. Echoing its preface, the album also highlights master–pupil relationships through the arrangement of Persian pictorial materials. Additionally, it carefully presents a juxtaposition of Chinese, European, and Persian painterly styles, with the ultimate aim of proving the superiority of the Persianate tradition (Roxburgh 2005: 245–307). Last but certainly not least, the album makes a forceful case for the moral value and legitimacy of the painterly arts, in which painter-decorators and portraitists are praised for their extraordinary talents and whose "conscience need not be pricked by the thorn of despair," an allusion to the ambivalence with which some regarded the arts of depiction (Roxburgh 2001: 160–207; Thackston 2001: 7–10, 12).

Safavid royal albums suggest that collecting both calligraphy and painting had become a popular pastime among members of the Safavid royal household during the first half of the sixteenth century. While manuscripts continued to be produced from Shah Tahmasp's reign until the accession of Shah ʿAbbas I in 1587, artists in the royal workshops began to produce larger numbers of single-page paintings for both royal patrons and an elite clientele outside palace walls (Canby 2000: 105–108). Independent paintings certainly existed in the Islamic world prior to this time, but they became a leading art form by the end of the sixteenth century.

Alongside the rise in art historical literature and works on artists' lives, market demand appears to have spurred many painters to sign their works. There exist numerous artists whose names are well recorded in sketches, paintings, and textual sources. Among the most renowned is Riza-yi ʿAbbasi (d. 1635), an artist who (as his epithet makes clear) at first worked for Shah ʿAbbas I but later also produced drawings and paintings for the blossoming art market of Safavid Isfahan. For example, in his *Girl with Fan* (Figure 34.6), Riza-yi ʿAbbasi includes his appropriately humble signature, "The Servant of the King of Holiness ʿAbbas," itself a testament to his royal service. The slender, long-necked female figure stands in a swaying pose, with fine calligraphic lines used to delineate her body, a characteristic of Riza's style (Canby 2000: 105–108). Along with the seal of Shah ʿAbbas impressed on the painting, the signature underscores the high status of court artists as well as the continuing importance of royal connoisseurship at the Safavid court. Such practices were echoed within the wider urban context of the new capital Isfahan, where freelance artists produced drawings and paintings reflecting everyday life for their friends and family members, local patrons, and foreign visitors.

Albums were often exchanged between Islamic courts during the early modern period. Within the context of gifting practices, Safavid and earlier Persian albums appear to have served the Ottomans as models. The Ottoman palace collections house albums from the fifteenth century, which were previously assigned to the Turkmen courts. However, ongoing research suggests that these albums may largely have been assembled in the Ottoman capital Istanbul instead. The portrait of Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446 and 1451–1481) is incorporated into one of these early albums that acquired its present form at the Ottoman court (Figure 34.7), probably soon after the Battle of Chaldiran (Necipoğlu 2016).

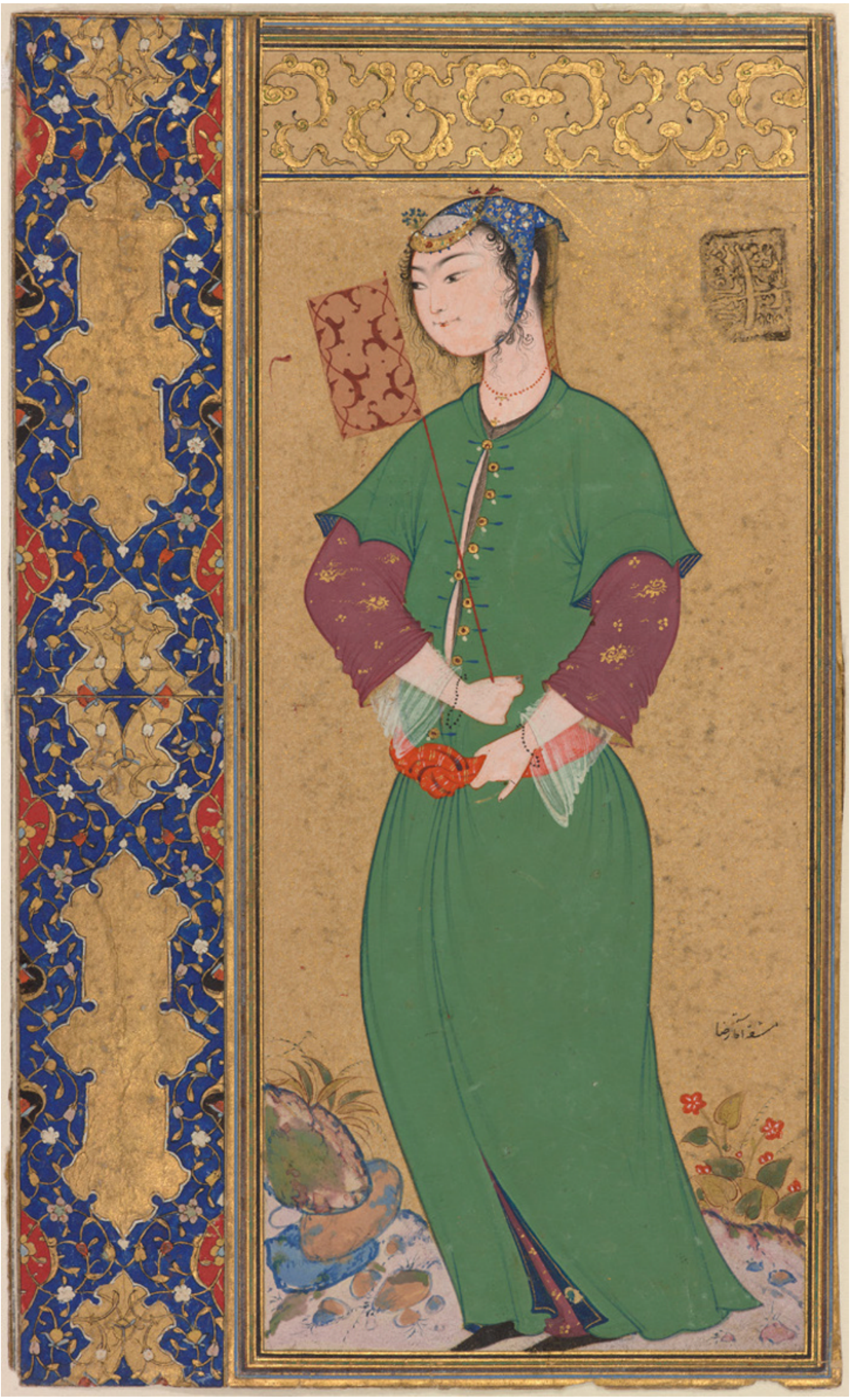


Figure 34.6 Lady with a Fan, Riza-yi ʿAbbasi, Isfahan, Iran, *c.* 1590–1592. Source: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, F1932.9. Reproduced with permission.

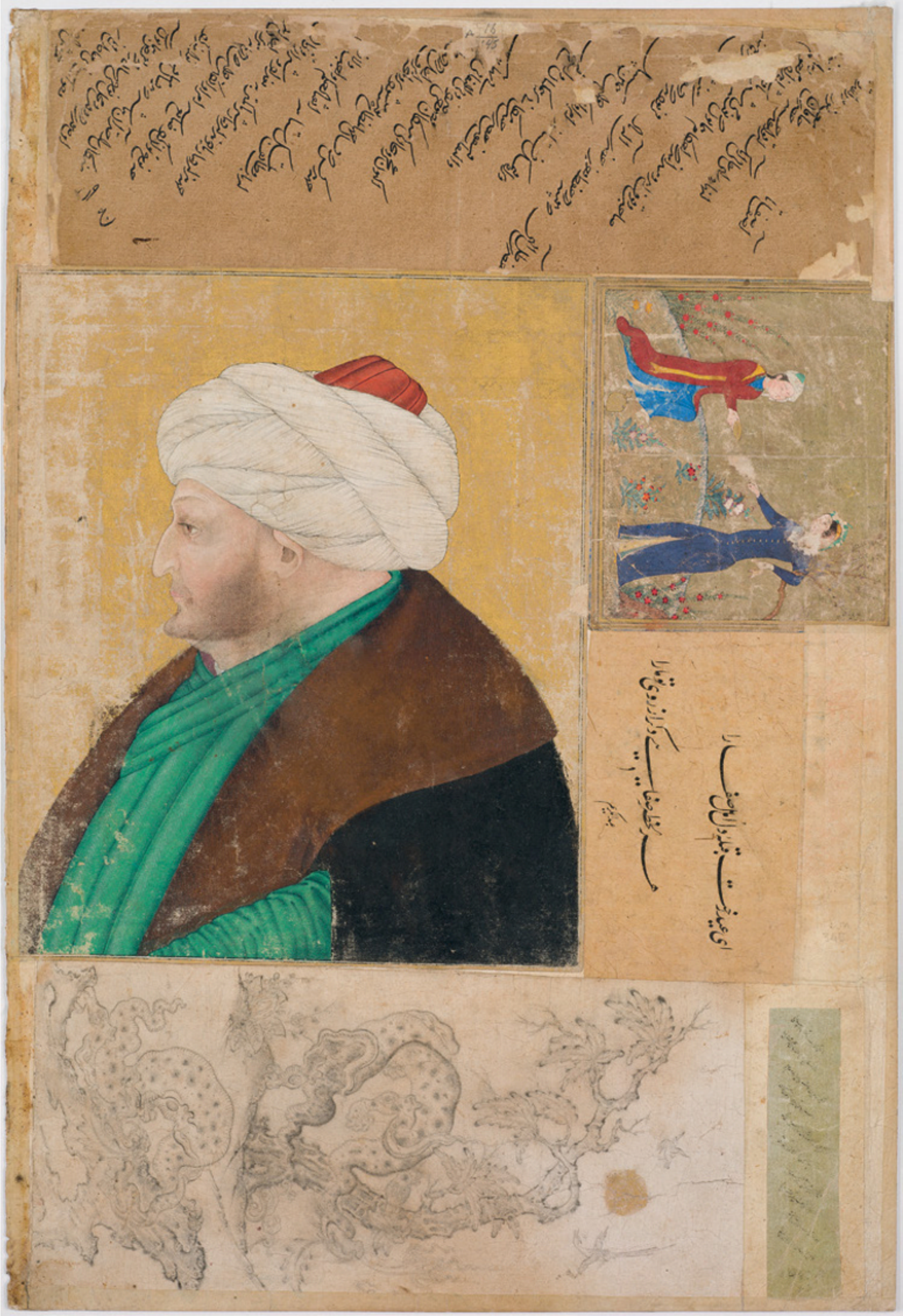


Figure 34.7 Album page including the portrait of Sultan Mehmed II. Portrait attributed to Sinan Beg, Ottoman, *c.* 1480. Source: Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 145v. Reproduced with permission.

The portrait is accompanied by examples of Persian calligraphy, a fifteenth-century Timurid or Turkmen painting of lovers in a lush landscape, and a sheet containing Chinese-inspired pen and ink drawings depicting dragons and trees, datable from the late fourteenth to the fifteenth century. The different orientations of the calligraphies and images show that this folio, like most album pages, was meant to be viewed from multiple angles. Such compositions also invited viewers to compare individual works to one another and to other compositions within the album. While the exact circumstances in which this and other early albums in the Ottoman treasury were put together remain unclear, albums dating from the second half of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries are clearly associated with the patronage of individual Ottoman rulers (Farhad and Bağcı 2009; Fetvacı 2012; Bağcı 2013).

Albums were also produced in India, and were the main focus of artistic production under the Mughal rulers Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Many imperial Mughal albums seem to have followed a similar format and demonstrate greater consistency than Safavid and Ottoman albums. In Mughal albums, the preface is typically followed by illuminated frontispieces and facing pages of dynastic portraits, often rendered larger than other images in the album. Then follows a succession of facing pages, which alternate between calligraphy and painting so that two pages of calligraphy are followed by two pages of paintings. Often, pages are arranged in groups that display thematic coherence (Wright 2008). While Safavid and Ottoman albums mostly comprised composite pages that juxtaposed painting, drawing, and calligraphy, Mughal album makers seem to have preferred tighter arrangements with a central composition on each page, set within an ornamental frame and decorated margins.

The Mughal shift from illustrated manuscripts to single-page paintings intended for inclusion in albums belongs to a larger trend that is also echoed in Safavid and Ottoman courts. This artistic development therefore might be connected to shifting notions of empire as well as an emerging ethos of early modernity most readily visible in both palace and urban contexts. This period is characterized by increased participation in social life, a keen awareness of the interconnected globe, and strengthening links between urban and courtly spheres. It also is marked by an increase in wealth among cultured elites, who used their resources to extoll the glories and pleasures of “modern” city life. Albums produced at this time indicate that collecting works of calligraphy, painting, and drawing became a more widespread practice as noncourtiers began to collect works of art as well. The imperial capitals of Isfahan, Istanbul, and Delhi were major urban centers of trade, in which diverse groups of people lived and worked together. During the early seventeenth century, as the economic power of the mercantile class rose, traders and businessmen were able to afford works of art, and thus further spurred the production of these types of collectible items.

This growth in the demand for art was not welcome by one and all, however. For example, Mustafa ‘Ali complains in his *Menakıb-ı Hünerveran* about uneducated commoners driving up the market prices of calligraphic samples during the 1580s in Istanbul. Similarly, Qazi Ahmad bemoans the new – and "inappropriately" lower-class – friends Riza-yi ʿAbbasi had made once he had left the royal workshop. These laments notwithstanding, vibrant urban milieus, boasting new classes of patrons with expendable income, fueled and diversified artistic production (Babaie 2001). For these reasons, new images of urban dandies, European figures, and wandering dervishes began to appear. In time, these nonroyal subjects also became attractive to courtly collectors, as is attested by the depictions of various urban types painted in a new visual idiom and compiled in the imperial album made for the Ottoman ruler Ahmed I around 1610 (Fetvacı 2012; Bağcı 2013).

Alongside the circulation and exchange of paintings across Islamic lands, artists' dynamic, even cosmopolitan, engagement with European products, aesthetics, and technologies is also evident in albums. In Safavid albums dating to before 1650, such engagement can be seen in the inclusion of European figures, reflecting the presence of European merchants and visitors in the streets and public squares of Isfahan. The adoption of European practices of modeling and shading along with the copying or coloring in of European prints resulted in a distinctively "Frankish" style (*farangi-saz*) in the Safavid capital (Babaie 2001; Canby 1996; Landau 2011).

By contrast, Ottoman artists selectively employed European styles earlier in the second half of the fifteenth century. Only a few surviving examples, including Mehmed II's portrait (Figure 34.7) and Renaissance engravings collected at his court, were mounted in albums (Necipoğlu 2012, 2016). During the second half of the sixteenth century, the creation of a self-consciously distinctive visual idiom at the Ottoman court largely precluded the imitation of foreign aesthetic modes, a practice that would change only over the course of the seventeenth century. European prints, now collected in increasing numbers, were included in the album made for Sultan Ahmed I *c.* 1610. It is also after 1600 that Ottoman artists began to depict European types, albeit less frequently than their Safavid neighbors (Bağcı *et al.* 2010: 224–241; Fetvacı 2012; Bağcı 2013).

The Mughal visual idiom that flourished around the same time enthusiastically appropriated aesthetic practices and themes from European visual culture. Mughal albums showcase European prints that have been colored in or illuminated as well as framed with lavishly painted margins, thus catalyzing Mughal artistic interpretations of Christian religious imagery. It appears, moreover, that Mughal allegorical imperial portraits were inspired by bust portraiture and visual allegory as found in European portraits of the time (Beach 1980; Koch 2012). A prime example of the Mughal allegorical portrait, discussed subsequently, is that of Shah Jahan standing in glory on the terrestrial globe below three flying putti (Figure 34.8).

While album paintings reveal the shared concerns and artistic inheritance of the Mughals, Safavids, and Ottomans, they also highlight differences between their visual cultures. Pictorial divergences include varying levels of engagement with

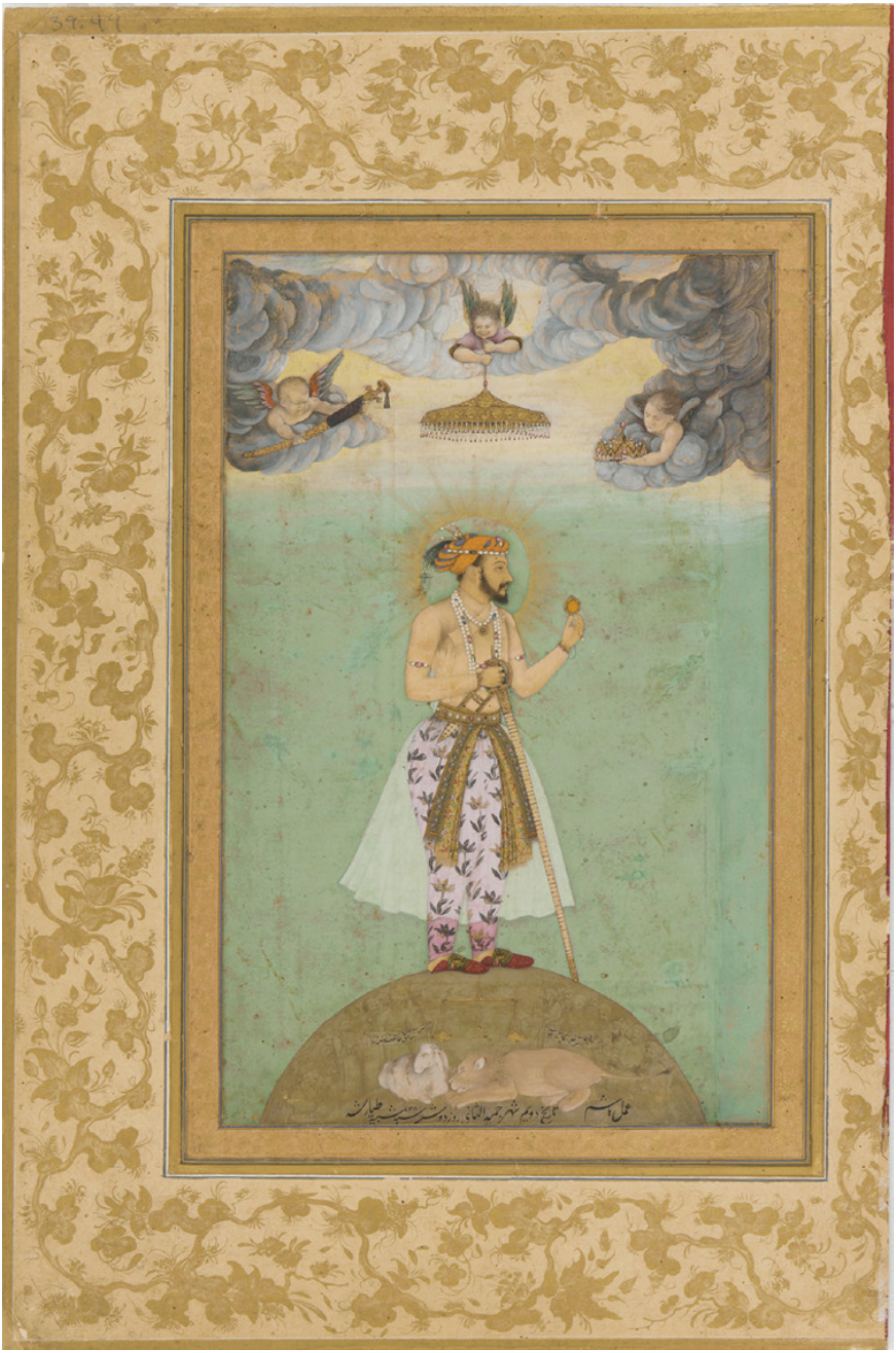


Figure 34.8 Portrait of Shah Jahan standing on the globe, by Hashim, Mughal India, *c.* 1618–1629. Source: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, F1939.49a. Reproduced with permission.

foreign styles and different aesthetic choices in the organization and presentation of materials in albums. Album contents also point to changing artistic and thematic preferences, thereby broadening the subject matter of paintings and drawings for an ever-expanding body of patrons.

Portraiture: From Royal to Urban

Despite a general unease about the depiction of animate beings in both Sunni and Shiʿi contexts, portraits were a popular subject for painting in Islamic courts during the early modern period. To some extent, portraiture drew upon physiognomic concepts deriving from neo-Platonic ideas and verbal descriptions (Roxburgh 2009; Soucek 2000). While most early Islamic portraits depict rulers and royals, later depictions encompass nonroyal and urban figures as well. Idealized, non-narrative images of monarchs were made as early as the Ilkhanid period, while the fifteenth century is replete with frontispiece paintings that depict Timurid rulers feasting, hunting, or fighting. Later in the fifteenth century, individual portraits not incorporated into narrative paintings became popular (Soucek 2000). Fulfilling eulogistic and propagandistic purposes, such portraits provide idealized representations of rulership.

The sixteenth-century Timurid historian Wasifi famously writes of portraits being passed around during social gatherings held at the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, with the participants discussing the paintings' success as pictorial likenesses (Necipoğlu 2000). Indeed, portraits of the Timurid ruler, his courtier ʿAli Shir Navaʾi, and the poet Hatifi grace the pages of albums that were compiled later in the sixteenth century. These images suggest that portraits, albeit idealized, were recognizable to their viewers in part due to the inclusion of vestment, headgear, and other accoutrements (Roxburgh 2009). Such attributes continued to be important identifiers in later Persianate painting as well.

The production of convincing likenesses was undertaken in earnest at the Mughal court beginning in the second half of the sixteenth century. Emperors Akbar and Jahangir were major patrons of portraiture and had many of their courtiers (as well as themselves) depicted in detail. These portraits were highly individualized in both physiognomy and costume. During Jahangir's reign, the illustrated histories that were so popular under Akbar gave way to allegorical imperial portraits, often incorporating symbolic attributes of kingship, including the crown, globe, and chain of justice (Beach 1980; Wright 2008: 165–177, 344–352). Consequently, Mughal emperors are shown shooting arrows at the personification of poverty, embracing rival rulers, or else preferring Sufi saints over earthly monarchs (Beach 1980; Koch 2012). Allegorical portraits of Mughal rulers were also created in group format. For example, paintings in the *Shah Jahan Album* show the emperors Babur, Humayun, Akbar, and Jahangir seated across from each other, thereby creating a dynastic portrait by emphasizing their blood ties and shared royal lineage (Necipoğlu 2000; Wright 2008: 106–139).

The interest in allegorical imperial portraiture continued into Shah Jahan's reign. In these later images, the monarch is depicted strictly in profile view, with unchanging features, reflecting increasingly formalized court ceremonies in which he was viewed by his subjects as if an icon (Wright 2008: 106–139, 411–412, 418–419). One example, signed by the painter Hashim, shows the Mughal ruler standing on a globe, on which a lion and a lamb lie together in peace and harmony (Figure 34.8). Also on the globe are the scales of justice as well as a group of pious men drawn in grisaille. Above Shah Jahan, three putti descend from cloud coronas: one holds a jeweled canopy directly above the monarch's head, while the other two offer him a sword and crown, both unmistakable royal attributes. In the painting's center, the ruler's head is visually emphasized by a radiant halo. From the flying putti to the golden aureole, the painting's iconography synthesizes European and local – Islamic, Persianate, and Hindu – imagery for maximum effect. Similarly, European techniques of verisimilitude are fused with a Persianate painting style to create a hybrid aesthetic.

While European, the putti certainly have cognates in the many images of angels found within earlier Persianate paintings, including mural paintings in Mughal palaces. The globe is indebted to European prototypes (Ramaswamy 2007), but it also reflects the monarch's regnal name: Shah Jahan, the "King of the World." Moreover, the halo not only represents the idea of divinely illuminated kingship one finds in Christian artistic traditions but also evokes the Persian and Hindu ideas of Divine Glory, and the Mughal belief that kingship is a light passed on from one ruler to the next (Asher 2004). To some degree, it also shows the Mughal rulers' desire to partake in the prophetic paradigm, as the Prophet Muhammad was often described as having been sent to mankind as a radiant light.

Although the Ottomans preferred not to use European iconography and allegorical depictions, they nonetheless employed some stylistic and compositional aspects drawn from European portraiture. Late fifteenth-century Ottoman artists experimented with multiple styles and formats, merging Timurid and Italian conventions as expressions of cosmopolitanism (Necipoğlu 2012). For example, Figure 34.7, with its use of the bust format and profile view, as well as its attention to verisimilitude, draws on Italian portraiture conventions to depict Sultan Mehmed II. The image is clearly inspired by Mehmed II's commissions of portraits and medals from Italian artists, particularly the portrait medal by Costanza da Ferrara, who portrayed the sultan from life (Raby 2000).

Around the middle of the sixteenth century, Ottoman artists started to eschew such foreign styles in favor of a regional visual idiom. Late sixteenth-century Ottoman portraits in illustrated genealogies and physiognomic treatises incorporate flattened, icon-like depictions of the rulers, stylized versions of earlier veristic images. Turko-Persian attributes, such as the handkerchief and the archer's thumb ring, projected the royal refinement and skill of the sultans. Rather than intended as eulogies of rulers by depicting their individual features, later Ottoman portraits aimed to celebrate the Ottoman dynasty as a whole through "serial portraiture"

(Fetvacı 2013a; Necipoğlu 2000). To some extent, this pictorial tendency reflects Ottoman court ceremonial and historical writing, both of which celebrated the longevity of the dynasty. Consequently, even when the portraits were accompanied by detailed physiognomic verbal descriptions or the accounts of the reigns of the sultans, the underlying pictorial suggestion was that the ruler's greatness derived most especially from his glorious lineage (Fetvacı 2013a).

Royal portraiture does not seem to have held as significant a position in the Safavid context until the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Safavid monarchs were seldom depicted in chronicles of their reigns, although the likenesses of some, including Shah ʿAbbas I, were transposed onto the faces of heroes depicted in *Shahnama* scenes (Rizvi 2012). The few extant portraits of Safavid rulers date from the time of Shah ʿAbbas I and later. The informality of these images seems to mirror the more charismatic and less isolated life of the Safavid ruler, who was the spiritual leader of the Sufi Safaviyya order. Whether such images were painted on the walls of reception rooms in palaces or inserted into albums, they essentially show rulers in a group setting. Such convivial gatherings included festivities and receptions, as is the case for the Safavid mural paintings in the Chihil Sutun Palace in Isfahan, one of which shows Shah Tahmasp receiving Humayun during his exile (Babaie 1994: 129). By the time of the mural's production in the 1660s, this particular Safavid–Mughal royal encounter had already formed the subject of depiction in Mughal illustrated histories (see Figure 34.2).

In the seventeenth century, artists and poets in the imperial capitals of Isfahan, Istanbul, and Delhi began to document their environs by depicting urban types and composing poetry that eulogized the vibrant cities and their inhabitants. It is debatable whether the depictions of urban types should be considered portraits or not. Indeed, the Arabic term *sura* encompasses both the words "image" and "portrait," while the difference between them is sometimes more precisely indicated in Persian sources by the word *chihra-gusha* for a painter of portraits rather than other kinds of images (Roxburgh 2009). Despite their thematic divergences, the idealized types in earlier Safavid royal albums and the urban figures of their seventeenth-century counterparts reveal a similar interest in the depiction of the human form. In Isfahan, some public spaces were decorated with murals depicting the young urban middle classes and foreign visitors. Safavid painters turned to producing images of youths, foreigners, and city dwellers, which they sold on the open market. No longer entirely dependent on royal patronage, artists such as Riza-yi ʿAbbasi and his pupil Muʿin Musavvir supplemented their royal commissions with freelance work that included portraits of well-dressed courtiers and foreign guests as well as artisans and archers.

The early seventeenth century also witnessed the beginnings of Ottoman "costume albums," which were often prepared for European visitors to the cosmopolitan capital Istanbul. These albums contained depictions of generic types representing different ethnic and socioeconomic groups that comprised the Ottoman Empire. They also incorporated depictions of Ottoman soldiers and bureaucrats.

While these albums served as souvenirs for visitors to the city, they also were prepared for a more local clientele (Bağcı 2013; Bağcı *et al.* 2010: 224–241; Fetvacı 2012).

As the Mughals, Ottomans, and Safavids constructed their imperial identities, their artistic styles changed and the horizons of the visual arts expanded over the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. While the Ottomans chose to convey the immutable authority of their dynasty in serial imperial portraiture, the Mughals deployed a hybrid pictorial style, European motifs, and allegorical expression. The Safavids, on the other hand, preferred to depict courtly gatherings with their socially interactive monarch at the center, and that only later in the seventeenth century. The incorporation of Europeanizing elements into Safavid painting was far more selective than in Mughal artistic spheres, becoming more pronounced only after the middle of the seventeenth century. Despite such divergences, in all three cultural contexts portraitists became increasingly interested in the documentation of quotidian life in urban settings. They also began to record their own names and contributions by signing their works and composing treatises on the pictorial arts, as best exemplified by the Turkmen Safavid artist Sadiqi Beg's 1597 treatise on painting entitled *Canon of Forms* (Sadiqi Beg 1981).

Conclusion

From 1450 to 1650, painting practices across Islamic lands extended the Timurid–Turkmen heritage into the early modern period while simultaneously developing along different lines in Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal milieus. While the Safavids promoted a Shiʿi worldview, the Ottomans constructed an imperial genealogy and the Mughals harnessed the power of allegorical imagery. At times, foreign styles and techniques (especially European ones) were creatively synthesized with Islamic painterly traditions; at others, local idioms were perfected in the drive to make a visual statement about cultural autonomy and power.

As the centuries pressed on, painting was no longer the prerogative of the princely elites. Instead, its sponsors and patrons comprised a more diversified urban clientele, whose interests and demands no doubt influenced supply. Illustrated manuscripts and single-page paintings were purchased and collected by increasingly large and varied groups of people. The rise of nonroyal customers with buying power inaugurated a flourishing of new themes and products concurrent with the artist's awareness of his self-worth and market value. This shift in the production and consumption of Islamic painting helped pave the way for further developments during the modern period.

Through a diachronic and synchronic exploration of painting in Turko-Persianate spheres during the early modern period, this chapter has aimed to stress the interconnectedness of pictorial practices at a moment of increasing communication and exchange across the Islamic world. Much work remains to be undertaken, however. It is hoped that future studies of early modern Islamic painting will continue to seek to overcome fragmented scholarly narratives, which tend to separate materials according to painterly schools and visual products. While such a compartmentalization of data enables the scholar to write with structural clarity, too often it overlooks the complex, entangled, and multilateral engagements omnipresent within Islamic artistic practices. While exploring new possibilities and trajectories, future scholarship should nevertheless continue to pay close attention to the visual qualities of paintings, their social, political, and religious contexts, and their varied uses by cultural agents who crafted visions of their local and global life worlds.

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35

Objects of Consumption: Mediterranean Interconnections of the Ottomans and Mamluks

Tülay Artan

While all history is ultimately transitional in a very fundamental sense, the early modern era appears particularly transitional and ambiguous. It was, in fact, a late nineteenth-century derivative sliced off from the front end of what used to be a single undifferentiated modernity, and it has remained harder to pin down between the more obvious consistencies of the preceding and overwhelmingly agrarian Middle Ages and the civilization of steam and steel that followed. Perhaps because of that, it also offers fertile ground for debates regarding the relative nature and pace of modernization in East and West, or the West vs. the Rest debates: the question often asked is whether it was here that the divide and the parting of ways emerged and the Orient began to lag behind. At the same time, serious obstacles are placed in the way of providing rigorous answers to such big questions, for this was also a time when modern states just in the making had not yet begun to keep statistics. Hence, historians are frequently forced or tempted into generalizing from evidence that is temporally and spatially limited, but which, precisely because of that transitional elusiveness and the varieties of experience that it encompasses, lends some support to (or seems to refute) virtually everything.

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When Did Consumer Society Take Off?

Uncertainties and controversies have also marked, and continue to mark, both Mediterranean and Renaissance studies. Historians, especially economic historians, have recently posited certain common trends for these two (or three) centuries. Despite regional diversity, urban–rural differences, or cyclical fluctuations, the early modern era, extending to 1800, is broadly seen as a period of global economic growth. Beyond this, there are differences. When, where, and how did growth and development, and profits and accumulation, begin to translate into material well-being? Can we pinpoint a critical rise in discretionary funds, and therefore the beginnings of an affluent consumerism?

Basically, three different answers have been provided by the last few decades of material culture and consumption studies. Some scholars suggest that the peaking of economic growth in the sixteenth century led to a worldwide proliferation of goods – hence to increased choice, varied markets, and the attraction of changing fashions – while some others favor a much later eighteenth-century alternative. Of course, there are also those who identify a noticeable rise in luxury and conspicuous consumption with the Dutch "Golden Age" in the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, the key point here is that while the eighteenth-century argument has more to do with developments in and around Britain, the sixteenth-century focus is part of a Mediterranean, Italian, and Renaissance framework. Looking at consumption habits in the Renaissance, for example, Richard Goldthwaite (1993, 2009) has posited the rise of a new kind of demand, thereby arguing against the hypothesis of economic decline in Italy at this time. He has also alleged that (because of fiscal deterioration) comparable consumption habits were lacking in the contemporary Islamic world.

However, a new generation of material culture and consumption studies has turned away from strictly economic to more cultural determinations in a globalizing world (Findlen 2013; Hicks and Beaudry 2010; Trentmann 2012). Goldthwaite's propositions, too, both with regard to Florence prospering uniquely to encourage a consumer revolution and the passive receptivity of the Mamluk and Ottoman Mediterranean, have come under attack. Recent research has not only brought to light evidence for a wealth of material goods in *all* Italian markets and homes but has also demonstrated that the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw an increase in the exchange of commodities from *all around the world* (Brotton 2002; Jardine 1996; Mack 2002; MacLean 2005; O'Malley and Welch 2007; Welch 2005). In particular, the Ottoman economy and society has been shown to have flourished beyond the sixteenth-century peak of the empire's military fortunes into the politically crisis-ridden seventeenth century, and to have partaken of early modern transformations. For example, with coffee consumption and the establishment of coffeehouses, it is said, not only were life patterns changed but capitalistic and pluralistic structures were reinforced too: day extended into night; new forms of public art and entertainment arose; a more complex urban society emerged, together with accompanying social and political actors including the middle-classes. Within the Ottoman territories, by 1600 there were several hundred coffeehouses in Istanbul, Cairo, and Aleppo, as well as several dozens in smaller towns (Kafadar 2014). In Venice, too, after coffee began to be sold commercially in the 1640s, coffeehouses sprang up around the city. A whole world of material culture developed around coffee drinking throughout the Mediterranean and beyond.

As cities became much better connected, so did people, ideas, commodities, and money. Changes in access to material goods affected only a small section of the population. Nevertheless, the social changes unleashed by the demand (and access) for luxury and variation had a much broader impact, leading to the modification of concepts of time, space, society, the individual, the family, and the state. As the example of coffee may indicate, the main thrust of a new Ottoman historiography has been to posit that many such developments were not limited to the West but also encompassed the Ottoman Empire. At issue is a new construct for Mediterranean history that allows for a large amount of regional diversity and complexity within a framework of shared opportunities as well as constraints. In this context, Ottomanists have been weighing in on the side of an eighteenth-century quantum jump in the demand for commodities and growth of consumption across classes, rather than engaging in the exploration of the consumptions habits from the 1450s to the 1650s.

Whether in the sixteenth century or earlier or later, in this fragmented yet interconnected Mediterranean world, it is generally agreed that the rise of consumer culture begins with luxury trade. But just what were the coveted luxury goods, where did they originate, and what other commodities were exchanged for them? At this point, other East/West dichotomies emerge. Period scholarship used to emphasize the distinct identity, internal force, and coherence of the Renaissance on the one hand, and its “influence on” or “reception by” Burgundians, Hungarians, Mamluks, or Ottomans, on the other. While new trends appear to have moved away from this “parting of the ways” approach (Belozerskaya 2002; Howard 2007; Jardine and Brotton 2000; MacLean 2005, 2007; Trivellato 2010), its shadow lingers insofar as Europe continues to be portrayed as possessed of an insatiable desire for Oriental luxuries while the eastern Mediterranean constitutes the receiving end of all cultural exchange (Rogers 2002). Beyond such muted yet persistent binary oppositions, there lurks a fresh set of questions. Just how far and deep did the East extend, or in other words, what “further Easts” were there for the most rare and pleasurable? Did the Eastern trade comprise goods so exclusive as to rest on only the fickle whims and desires of the status-seeking rich? Or was it really a trade based on lesser luxuries, such as sugar or spices or coffee, available to many even if only in modest quantities or diluted forms? What was the East getting in return for its treasures? Back in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, how did Renaissance scholars, artists, and craftsmen appropriate and rearticulate Mamluk or Ottoman sensitivities? As for the Mamluks or the Ottomans, what were they making out of this exchange? What was their perception or assessment of the staples and luxuries of the larger Mediterranean?

Market and Non-Market Forms and Levels of Exchange

Though many of these problems are in the nature of agendas or channels for future research, the emerging trend is to see most or all cultural exchanges that are held to characterize the Renaissance no longer in terms of "influence" or "adoption," or "one-way receptiveness" but as the cultural intersection and transmission of multiple traditions – a fluid, two-way traffic and "translation of artistic vocabularies" (Necipoğlu 2012). From the 1450s to the 1650s, indeed, the Mediterranean was changing; population grew, urbanization increased, and demand escalated, to which supply, too, responded, resulting in a proliferation of both regional and interregional trade. Together with all political, cultural, or religious differences, a remarkable movement of people, ideas, and objects through trade, travel, or diplomacy took place. Predictably, contact was particularly intense within the lace border of the littoral zone ringing the Middle Sea, enabling long-distance commodity exchanges, including staples as well as rare luxury goods, to flourish even in times of acute military conflict. Meanwhile, coastal areas also remained connected to inland metropolises.

But what was the overall coverage of such exchanges, and the channels through which they flowed; last but not least, how did they change and develop over time? For this whole period under consideration, we have to distinguish between at least three types of movement, not all of which were purely economic. The first was *gift exchange*: in an era of (only superficially commercialized) agrarian societies still dominated by landed (if partly mercantile) elites centered on monarchical houses, a top echelon of royal and imperial gifts circulated initially between the highest ranked dynasties but could then be recycled and percolated down to the level of lesser rulers and even to their attendants. They typically involved horses, hunting equipment, arms and armor; rare and expensive textiles (silk, velvet or cloth of gold) and garments; narrative tapestries; jewelry, gold and silver vessels, rock crystals; exotic animals and other exotica, including corals and pearls from tropical seas, rhino horns and narwhal tusks, or precious and semiprecious stones – sardonyx, agate, lapis lazuli – from outside as well as within the Mediterranean world.

Second, when we come to truly economic trade and commerce, driven by the profit motive, again we encounter several overlapping layers, starting with *long-distance, cross-cultural trade* that traversed the largest spaces both in the sheer physical and the inter-civilizational sense. Inevitably looming large were the most expensive luxury articles that made heavy transport costs and other high risks more or less regularly worthwhile. Not surprisingly, therefore, included here were the fine silks and velvets, the crystals, and the gold and silverware, all of which also figured as royal gifts, complemented by gold-and-silver inlaid or open-worked brass vessels, clocks, gilded and enameled glasswork, ceramic lusterware, lacquerware, and marquetries. Mamluk and Ottoman carpets also made their appearance as a significant item at this point (Spallanzani 2007).

Simultaneously, there was also a broader third stream of commercial goods that were not so upmarket entering international trade. Merchants took large-scale imports of raw silk and cotton, dyestuffs and alum (essential ingredients of textile dyeing as well as glass and soap production), plus grain and spices from the Levant to the western Mediterranean, and in return brought European wool and linen cloth, metals (iron, copper, lead, tin, and silver), olive oil, nuts, dried fruit, and honey from southern Italy, Crete, and Cyprus. On other, somewhat shorter circuits, finished products originating from Mediterranean ports to the west (Majorca, Zaragoza, Cordoba), center (Venice and Crete), or east (Alexandria and Beirut) destined to reach Florence, Milan, Mantua, and Cologne and beyond included both metals and textiles. On a still lower rung of the ladder were the bulkier and cheaper goods comprising more mundane articles, including weapons, horse trappings, books, paper, medicinal goods, coffee, sugar and spices, glass, ceramic or metal kitchenware, work tools, articles of heating and lighting, household furniture (chests, tables, and chairs), bedding, towels, and toiletry – in short, what might be called a "domestic consumption" package.

Courtly Gifts: Negotiating Political, Confessional, and Linguistic Borders

Starting a little further back in time than the beginning of our subperiod, the arrival of the Ottomans on the scene in the later fourteenth century meant a new and more intercultural turn for gifting and re-gifting among the princely courts of the Mediterranean. Even with its palace and court still in the making in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, this rising dynastic state quickly became a center of attraction and a unifying element in the new world order. Over time it began to receive a continuous flow of gifts, booty, and tribute from the former lands of the receding Byzantine Empire, as well as, occasionally, extraordinary amounts of ransom. After the 1396 battle of Nicopolis, for example, among the treasures that the Duke of Burgundy (Philippe II the Bold) delivered to the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I in order to have his captive son set free were horse trappings and hunting equipment said to have been of exquisite workmanship, including falconers' gloves embroidered with pearls, gems and Cypriote gold, plus harriers, hounds, and white gerfalcons. Clearly, this fits in with the widespread status of riding and hunting as a war game and therefore a lordly prerogative. Also consistent with royal ideals were Philippe's textiles and large-scale Arras tapestries depicting scenes from the life of Alexander the Great, a favorite hero and role model for kings to the west and east of the Mediterranean (Froissart 1825: vol. 13, 422; discussed in Necipoğlu 2012: 3–4).

Alongside this ideological interaction and the shared expression of royal ideals and their artistic expression, the entire Burgundian package might have directly enriched the Ottoman court, and also served as a model for its own public displays. Moreover, for at least some of its contents it was not a final resting place. Only a few years after Nicopolis, Bayezid I, who also claimed to have descended from Alexander as the archetypal world-conqueror, clashed with Timur, another world-conqueror out of West Asia. Having routed Bayezid at the battle of Ankara in 1402, Timur went on to sack the Ottoman sultan's Bursa palace, whereupon one of Philippe II's Alexander tapestries was transported to Samarqand.

An even more successful Alexander of his time, who would have appreciated these narrative tapestries was Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, who had two palaces built and decorated one after the other as his court settled in Istanbul, the third Ottoman capital, after 1453. In the Topkapı Palace collections today, there is an undated Burgundian tapestry that curiously features Saint George's coat of arms featuring two crosses and a dragon but not the martyr himself (Figure 35.1). Also shown are a rabbit, a deer, a bird, and a leopard, surrounded by richly embroidered foliage and brightly colored flowers. This is a rather unusual iconography that places the dragon, coiling around a tall tree at the center, in something like a hunting scene; it is possible that it was explicitly made for the Ottoman court, and therefore avoided human representation. At the same time, it is skirted with a sumptuous mid-fifteenth-century Italian velvet on all four sides, which might have been added in Venice or Florence before it was gifted to the Ottomans. Also in the Topkapı Palace collections is a crimson silk velvet ceremonial kaftan of very similar design that is of Italian provenance (Figure 35.2). The Venetian historian Marin Sanudo's *Diarii* (covering 1496–1533) lists sable furs, numerous gold-interwoven garments, and velvets of diverse colors intended for Mamluk and Ottoman sultans. And indeed, the fifteenth-to-seventeenth-century velvet kaftans at the Topkapı Palace happen to be overwhelmingly made of Italian velvets (Atasoy *et al.* 2001: 223).

Most of these sumptuous costumes and trappings, however, as well as tapestries narrating royal hunts or heroes, being susceptible to wear and tear have not survived over time. In contrast, gifts of rare rock crystals from European kings appear to have been carefully hoarded at the Ottoman court. A few of these, enhanced with Burgundian, German, or Ottoman embellishments, stand witness to the back-and-forth movement of luxury objects between early modern courts (von Falke 1934)[1] (Figure 35.3).

The Ottomans knew of earlier or contemporary inventories of Mediterranean court treasures, as well as works like the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, an eleventh-century inventory of treasury of the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt, whose fourteenth-century copy came into the possession of an Ottoman statesman. The latter, through descriptions of special ceremonies, provides fascinating glimpses of the furnishings and decorations that characterized the wealth and sophistication of early Islamic courts (al-Qaddumi 1996).[2] Nevertheless, we have no comparable

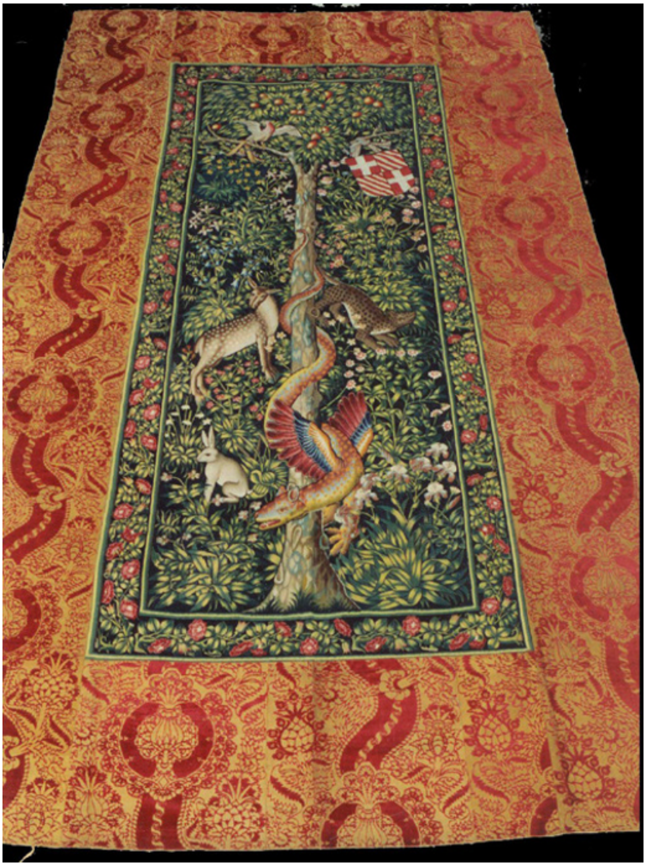

FIGURE 35.1 Tapestry (Burgundian?), fifteenth century, skirted with fifteenth-century Italian (probably Venetian) silk velvet with silver-gilt-wrapped brocaded wefts. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul. Inv. Nr. :13/1422; l: 457 cm. w: 252 cm. Source: Hadiye Cangökçe. Reproduced with permission.

pre-sixteenth-century record of the acquisition and collection of beautiful things at the Ottoman court. This exacerbates difficulties of tracing origins or transactions. A case in point is a Late Gothic, fourteenth-century silver gilt and enameled table fountain of Franco-Burgundian workmanship, associated with Charles V (r. 1364–1380), and alleged to have been found in the garden of Yıldız Palace in early twentieth-century Istanbul (W.M.M. 1925). It could have been a gift from the Burgundian court to a late Byzantine emperor, but it may also have been part of the 1397 tribute to Bayezid I, or even a much later gift to Mehmed II or Bayezid II.

However, this is exceptional, for like horse trappings and tapestries, metalwork (including clocks) did not last long – or remain long in the same place.[3] One of the earliest surviving Ottoman treasury registers, dated 1505, lists some silverware

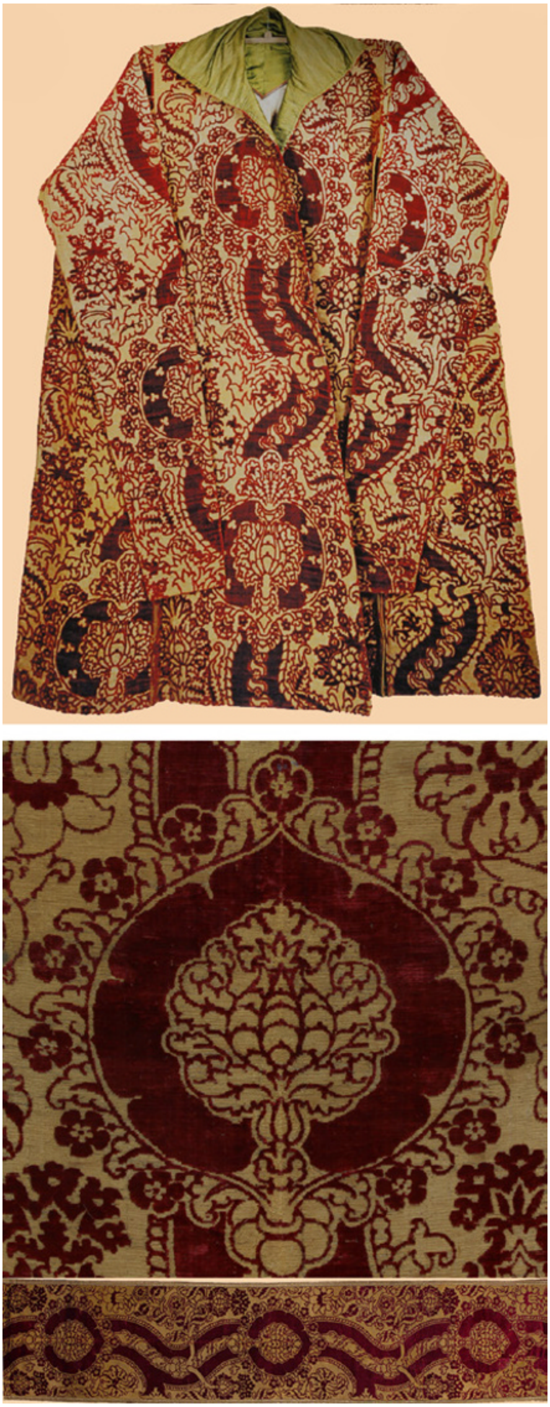

Figure 35.2 Silk velvet ceremonial robe (kaftan), fifteenth century, Italian (probably Venetian), lined in Istanbul with Ottoman satin. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul. Inv. Nr. :13/500; l : 109 cm. Source: Hadiye Cangökçe. Reproduced with permission.

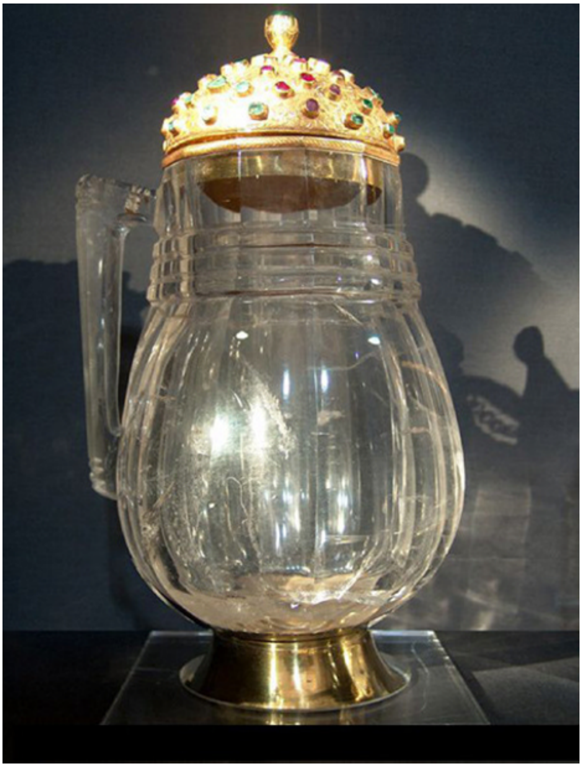

Figure 35.3 Rock crystal pitcher, fifteenth century, Burgundy; with an encrusted golden lid added, sixteenth century, Ottoman. Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul. Inv. Nr. : 2/472. Source: Hadiye Cangökçe. Reproduced with permission.

decorated with Kufic calligraphy, as well as others embellished with European figurative decorations (*gebr tasvirleri*) (Öz 1938: fol. 3). The Ottomans repeatedly presented special batches of gifts to Mamluk, Ramazanoğlu, Dulkadiroğlu, and Aqqoyunlu ambassadors as well as those from the Crimean khanate or the sultan of the Maghrib (in 1503–1504). These gifts regularly comprised silver jugs and trays (usually two of each), as well as 6–10 standing cups or bowls. These were of two specific kinds. One variety was called *devetabanı* (after camel hoofs), perhaps referring to a lobed stand that was a European form, while the other, referred to as *Lârî*, may have originated in Laristan, in southeastern Iran on the Persian Gulf (Açıkgöz 1996; Barkan 1979).

Most of the gold or silverware was eventually melted down and recycled, but the Mamluk brass vessels, inlaid with silver, gold, and a black compound, were treasured, assimilated, or imitated so as to enrich the material culture and aesthetic horizons of Renaissance Italy (Contadini 2006). Likewise china was hoarded in all princely treasuries. In 1490, the Mamluk sultan sent a batch of Chinese porcelain to the Venetian *doge* Barbarigo. Unlike earlier times, prominent wealthy citizens, such as Filippo Strozzi of Florence, were by then able to procure Chinese porcelain as well as Syrian blue-and-white ceramics via Venice (Spallanzani 1978: 50–52). Porcelain remained rare and princely, if not divine. Thus in 1514, when Giovanni Bellini depicted an outdoors festivity for Alfonso I d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara, and portrayed a number of Chinese porcelains together with oriental gold and glass vessels, it was called the *Feast of the Gods*. The Ottomans sacked the Safavids' Hasht Bihisht Palace in Tabriz in 1514, and captured the Mamluk capital Cairo in 1517. From both places, huge numbers of Chinese porcelains quickly made their way to Istanbul's imperial kitchens and the sultan's table, in addition to those bought in the market.[4] In time, some of these were gifted out of the palace while others continued to arrive in Ottoman markets in a variety of ways. Then and subsequently, members of Ottoman embassies to Venice routinely bought and sold for themselves on the market. They must have carried these and other luxuries back for personal gain.[5]

Among Venetian gifts to the Ottomans, the most fragile were Murano glass, mirrors, and unworked corals and shells. There were also chairs and tables, the latter decorated with colored marbles and other precious or semiprecious stones. This may also have been the source of the stone *intarsia* panel that decorates Murad III's bedchamber (of 1578–1579) at the Topkapı Palace (Figure 35.4). Other examples of stone inlay panels grace the Sultan's Lodge at Ahmed I's mosque (1606–1617) in Istanbul. These were probably tabletops which had found no use for dining in the Ottoman palace. Ottoman taste in the mounting or carving of hardstones did not match the European or Mughal interest in *intarsia* and *pietre dure* panels or decorative objects, except for jade cups and vases.[6]

But above and beyond all this, the bulk of royal gift exchanges comprised textiles. Early sixteenth-century gifts from Istanbul to the ambassadors of Venice, Crimea, Hungary, or the princes of Chios were routinely limited to luxury garments made of Bursa silks or velvets (Açıkgöz 1996; Barkan 1979); only in special cases were European cloth and northern furs (re)gifted. Ottoman gifts to their own peripheral authorities (sometimes including horses and horsecloths of brocaded velvet) were richer; a colored fabric from faraway Samarqand or cotton fabrics from Baalbek, then under Mamluk control, were perhaps intended to convey messages about the expanding outreach of Ottoman power (Muhanna 2010). Belts, sashes, and embroidered handkerchiefs had a symbolic value, and only a few select embassies received such gifts.

If we compare the Ottoman treasury register of 1505 with the court treasures of the Medici, Gonzaga, d'Este families, and others (Chambers 1992; Luzio and Renier 2009; Stapleford 2013), what is lacking? The most notable absences boil down to antiquities, sculpture, and monumental painting. However, new research promises to shed light on the Ottomans' investment in collecting not only arts and antiques but also naturalia, memorabilia, and mirabilia (Artan forthcoming).

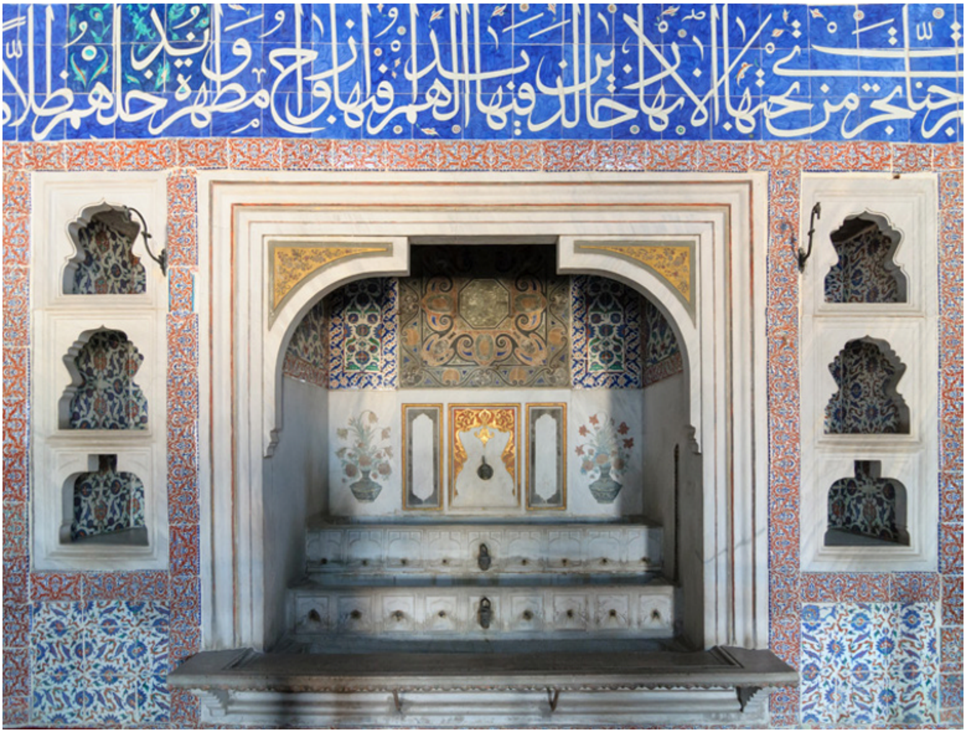

FIGURE 35.4 *Pietra dura* panel decorating the fountain in the bedchamber of Murad III (1578–1579), Harem. Topkapı Palace Museum, İstanbul. Source: Tülay Artan. Reproduced with permission.

Cross-Cultural Portraiture: Mirroring the "Other"

One truly exceptional patron of the arts and antiquities was Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481). The Ottoman treasury-cum-library housed his personal book collection that included Greek and Latin classics, reflecting the sultan's interest in past and present Western culture, as well as Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts. It was his familiarity with and appreciation of "lifelike" Italian portraits that led Mehmed II to approach his peers in Venice, Florence, Naples, and Rimini in order to ask for artists and architects under their patronage. In early 1461, Mehmed II contacted Sigismondo Malatesta of Rimini to request the services of Matteo de' Pasti, an assistant of Pisanello, who never made it to Istanbul. But others did, including Venice-born Costanzo da Ferrara (sent by the king of Naples) in the late 1470s, and as major a figure as Gentile Bellini arrived in the Ottoman capital in September 1479, possibly staying until the end of the following year. He painted portraits of Mehmed II shortly before the sultan's death in 1481, drew portraits of his courtiers, and is said to have decorated the sultan's new palace (the Topkapı) with paintings. To judge from the famous medal of the sultan signed by Bellini, which he himself is shown wearing in the frontispiece of Carlo Ridolfi's *Le Maraviglie dell'arte, ovvero le vite degli illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato* (1648), the artist was honored with the titles of Golden Knight and Palace Companion. Bertoldo di Giovanni, a Florentine sculptor under the patronage of Lorenzo de' Medici, also cast a portrait medal of Mehmed II, probably derived from that of Bellini. Two other contemporary portraits on paper of the sultan, attributed to the Ottoman court painters Ahmed Şiblizade of Bursa and Sinan Bey, have also been shown to have drawn on the models provided by Bellini and Costanzo (Necipoğlu 2012; Raby 1987).

Giovanni Maria Angiolello of Vicenza, a courtier at Mehmed II's palace, says in his *Historia turchesca* that because Bayezid II had no appreciation of the figurative art collected by his father, they were sold off in the bazaar and bought by Italian merchants residing in Istanbul's Pera (Galata) district. Yet Bayezid II also sent many envoys of his own to Italy and exchanged gifts with other royals in an attempt to have his brother Prince Cem kept hostage – after Cem had sought refuge in Rhodes and was subsequently held captive in France and in the papal court in Rome. As part of these contacts, Francis II Gonzaga, the Marquis of Mantua, corresponded with Bayezid in the 1490s about Arab horses, and sent him valuable gifts including an oil-painted portrait of himself, of Prince Cem, and of the Mamluk ambassador to Rome (Bourne 2011; Necipoğlu 2012: 46–48; Pedani 2009: 191). Curiously, Bellini produced no paintings of Ottoman society and the court following his return from Istanbul. His studies of various persons, however, were later used in depicting Muslims in Western art. This is the foundation for Pinturicchio's frescoes in the Borgia Apartments of the Vatican (1490), as well as his *Pope Pius II at Ancona* painting (*c.* 1503) in the Piccolomini Library in the Siena Cathedral, where Cem is portrayed in the right foreground (Goetz 1938).[7]

The Ottoman interest in portraiture was echoed at the Mamluk court. The Flemish traveler Van Ghistele, who visited Egypt in 1482–1483, reported meeting several European artists in Cairo, some of whom were in the sultan's service. Paintings and engravings of Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri (r. 1501–1516) also attest to the presence of Western artists and craftsmen in Cairo and elsewhere. We have it on Leonardo da Vinci's own word that he was hired by a Syrian amir of Qansuh's predecessor for an undefined mission in East Anatolia that he says he did carry out; it does not seem, however, to have been of an artistic nature (Behrens-Abouseif 2004). We also have visual accounts of the Mamluk cities by artists on their way to the Holy Lands, such as those of Erhard Reuwich published in Bernhard von Breydenbach's *Pelegrinationes* (1486); they portrayed a different kind of urban life, unfamiliar buildings, cityscapes, and landscapes. An example is the *Reception of a Venetian Embassy* (in Damascus) by the Bellini School (inscribed 1511) (Campbell and Chong 2005: 22–23; Raby 1982).

The studio of Titian, who was trained in the Bellini school, produced an arresting oil portrait of Sultan Süleyman I, based on studies by European envoys in the 1530s. In 1578, the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha appealed to Venetian authorities in request of a series of paintings depicting Ottoman sultans. The paintings in question, modeled on those of Guillaume Rouillé and Paolo Giovio, and attributed to Veronese, were then "translated" into sultans' "serial portraits" in the format of illustrated genealogies, a new genre of manuscript painting created in praise of dynastic continuity (Fetvacı 2013; Necipoğlu 2000a: 22–61, 2000b: 202–207; Raby 2000a: 64–95, 2000b: 136–163).

Starting with an early "visual cosmopolitanism and creative translation," eventually Istanbuliote painters formulated a new synthesis, an "Ottoman mode" of representation, in the Süleymanic era by the 1550s. The illustrated manuscripts produced at the court were overwhelmingly dynastic histories and sultans' serial portraits as painting remained not a mode of public display but a private luxury. The dynastic eulogies in question mostly comprised the marching army, battles, capturing Christian towns and fortresses, and ceremonial scenes from the Topkapı Palace. The subject matter of murals decorating royal or upper-class reception rooms, too, were battles or courtly scenes (Necipoğlu 1991), to be later replaced by aniconic cityscapes or vases with flowers and bowls of fruit.[8]

A fascinating interior, the so-called Aleppo Room from a Christian broker's house in Ottoman Syria (1601–1603) is also a translation of sorts, in this case from book illumination and painting to decorative painted wood panels. Here, typically Ottoman naturalistc floral ornaments are inserted with Persianate figurative medallions depicting Old and New Testament subjects, literary themes, and scenes of courtly life, like those portrayed in Safavid or Ottoman manuscript paintings (Gonnella 1996; Gonnella and Kröger 2008) (Figure 35.5).

Domestic Interiors: Hygiene, Comfort, Taste, and Refinement

Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, merchants from Venice, Florence, and Genoa continued to establish their households in the Levant as commercial and business realities outweighed crusading. During a victory celebration in 1465, Mehmed II visited the house of two Florentine merchant bankers in Pera, the European quarter of Constantinople, where he was feted and presented with confections. His father Murad II was also known for developing cordial relations with the international merchants' community in the Ottoman domains, and had frequented the mansion of one who lived in Gallipoli. One of the agents that Mehmed was said to be in contact with, Benedetto Dei, returned to Florence in 1467 with exotic animals and other gifts for Lorenzo de' Medici. Such objects that travelers brought back from eastern lands were a source of inspiration for Italian artists.

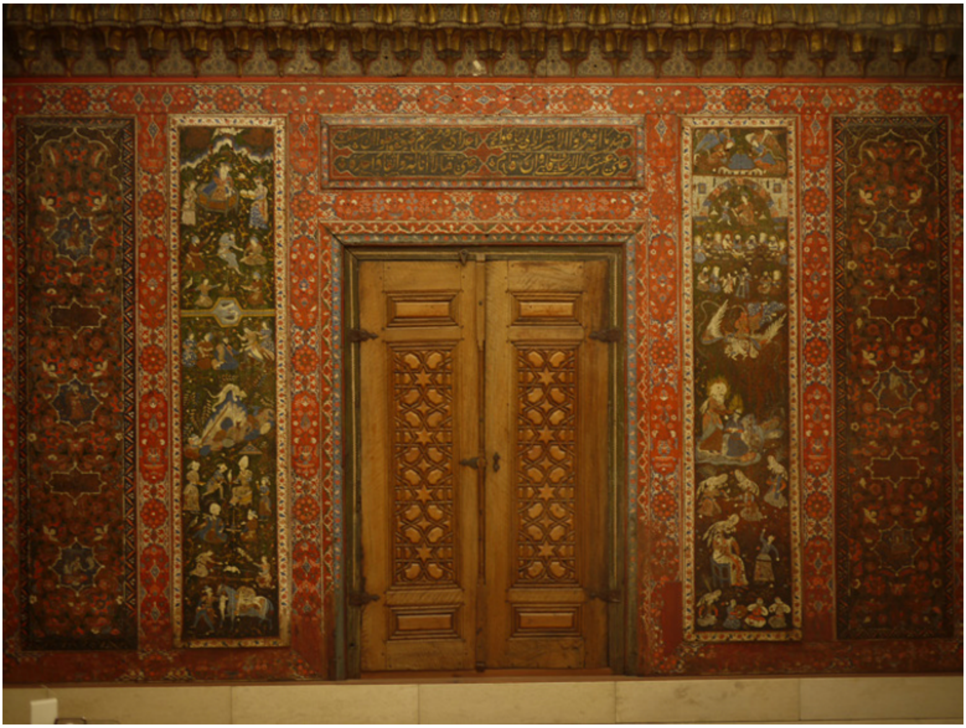

Figure 35.5 Aleppo Room, Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum, Berlin. Inv. Nr. : I. 2862. Wood, multilayered painting using a variety of pigments and metal coatings. Source: Copyright Museum für Islamische Kunst – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photo by Johannes Kramer.

In 1469 as many as 50 or more Florentine companies active in Istanbul as well as others in provincial Ottoman trading centers like Bursa and Edirne were reported (Babinger 1978: 277). Similarly, in mid-fifteenth-century Damascus there was a sizable community of Venetians – predictably all men, often with no family accompanying them. A small sample of their probate inventories reveals the spectrum of imported and locally purchased goods. Two of the deceased who have been studied were merchants who traded in gems, jewelry, spice jars, glass beads, cloth, and tailored garments, while a third was the Consul, a nobleman (Bianchi and Howard 2003; Howard 2007). An abundance of textiles appears in all three inventories, but the last is particularly interesting for its large number of gowns. This Consul also had two large carpets for benches, two middle-sized, thick-piled carpets, and three smaller carpets that were also thick-piled. All, however, were old or used. As for these two merchants, one had two new (but small) carpets, plus 19 gondola mats, while the other owned only a red jute carpet as well as a small jute mat indicated to be in poor condition. In short, like the Consul's these too were mostly old and used, probably bought secondhand.

The most valuable ones available in the market were sent off to patrons such as Filippo Strozzi (Spallanzani 2007).

Also relevant is the 1507 postmortem inventory of the commercial agent Giovanni di Francesco Maringhi, who, as the representative of several Florentine family firms (such as the Venturi, Medici, Galilei, and Michelozzi), had resided in a large Pera/Istanbul house with many rooms from 1497 onwards (Richards 1932). The household items listed in his Istanbuliote probate inventory underline a double similarity. Although they recall Florentine and Venetian inventories of the time; their contents are also very similar to those listed in sixteenth-century Ottoman inventories. But Maringhi had also acquired beds and canopies, counters and cupboards, tables (one of which had three shutters) and benches, writing desks and chairs, and credenzas. What this and other evidence points to is the conclusion that the key difference between eastern and western Mediterranean homes at this time centers on movable furniture.[9]

Until the eve of modernity, in the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Levant, valuable items (such as polychrome Iznik ceramics, or other, especially blue-and-white china) were stored and displayed in built-in niches covering at least an entire wall surface and displaying fine marble or woodwork, or on shelves running along the upper part of the walls, decorating the reception chambers and the multifunctional rooms of elite homes. Sofas running close to the floor along the entire length of the walls, decorated with cushions upholstered in patterned silks and velvets, brought warmth, comfort and color to the interiors together with curtains and rugs, felts and flat-weaves that were spread on the floor or hung on the walls.

In contrast, tables, chairs, and permanent beds were always part of a more Western or European lifestyle. As their family houses expanded, the Italian elite became more concerned with furnishing and embellishing them, and came to require more cabinets and cupboards for storage and for displaying their refined taste. Over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the number and variety of beds, tables, benches, and chairs grew as European bankers' and merchants' houses came to assume a vital function in social life as markers of status and wealth (Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis 2006).

The absence of visual records for Mamluk or Ottoman interiors, especially when set against the realism found in contemporary Italian art, poses a major problem for material culture studies as well as for understanding public and private codes of conduct. Exceptions are few: in the mid-1550s, artists in the retinues of imperial envoys depicted the official and private reception halls of a grand vizier's palace (Artan 1994; Artan 2015). Through their eyes, it is a setting of tile revetments and/or brushwork, benches along the walls, windows featuring (probably Venetian) glass panes (colored discs set in arched panels of plaster), as well as a white marble fireplace. The paved floor and the brightly painted wooden ceiling add to the overall sense of opulence. At the same time, the only movables in sight are three fine carpets spread over the raised platform for the grand vizier's bench or sofa. To these we may add a few miniatures delineating monumental interiors decorated with tiles, stained-glass windows, wooden window and door shutters, curtains, spreads and carpets, as well as gargantuan candle-holders, incense burners, and other golden vessels – all emblematic of the Ottoman decorative taste (Artan 2015).

Hence it is most interesting that an Arab Druze prince, the governor of Beirut Fakhr al-Din ibn Korkmaz ibn Maʿan (d. 1635) – who rebelled against the Ottoman sultan in 1613, then defected to the Medici court, and spent the next five years in Livorno, Florence, Palermo, and Naples – not only patronized a few Italianate buildings in his homeland upon his return but also decorated them with cloth-covered chairs and tables, as well as armoires with secret compartments, which he imported or received as gifts from his acquaintances in Italy (Gorton 2013). Like his now-lost oil portrait made at the Medici Court by an obscure (French?) painter, which survives in an etching copy, most of his possessions were probably taken to Beirut. The orangery, terrace walks, and pedestals for statues in the gardens of his ancestral palace at Deir al Qamar, possibly made by Florentine artists, caught the eyes of Fakhr al-Din's later visitors.[10] At the same time and upon Cosimo II's request, he offered to provide the Grand Duke with some marble from classical sites in the Levant as well as a number of pieces which he had collected to adorn his own palaces (Gorton 2013: 144). He also sent to Florence bales of silk, dogs, and horses (with trappings, among them a turquoise-studded breastplate and the rest in silver-gilt and gold-embroidered violet brocade). In return, he requested (among other things) silver candelabra, jewelry, and lap dogs. He did receive a lot of silverware and jewelry, along with a telescope of Galileo (with its wooden case), who was at the Medici court at the time, an amber and gold chess set, and a fragrant hand pomade. He also received some crates of books and two printing presses (from Rome). As usual, luxury textiles moved both ways. Ladies who accompanied him in Tuscany and elsewhere must have put in their separate requests for riches they had seen with their own eyes.

Royal ladies in Istanbul also had a keen eye for such imports. Nurbanu Sultan (d. 1583), the favorite consort of Selim II (née Cecilia Venier-Baffo), requested from her native Venice bales of silk, robes of silk damask, and gold cloth, and in one instance small lap dogs (of the kind that Fakhr al-Din was also eager to get). These were very fashionable among aristocratic ladies in Italy. In the 1590s Talikîzâde, an Ottoman historian, retrospectively eulogized the glory, generosity, and perhaps curiosity of Hürrem Sultan (d. 1558) in things rare and beautiful: "and in whichever country she heard of a rare curiosity, she was in the habit of taking great pains to have it brought to Istanbul." By way of example Talikîzâde listed a golden goblet from Chios, multilayered velvets from Europe, and a thousand pairs of doves from Egypt. Likewise, Costantini Garzoni (d. 1573), a Venetian diplomat, had written that "in addition to the large quantity of jewels she already owns," Mihrümah (d. 1578), Hürrem's daughter and the grand vizier Rüstem's wife "buys almost everything that is sold in the city."[11] Necipoğlu (2014: 353–354) has located a reference to four types of design on paper, annotated with Turkish instructions, sent to Venice for cushions Rüstem ordered for his daughter. She remarks, "Just as patterns on paper were sent from Istanbul and Cairo to Venice in the 1550s for commissioned objects (including patterned brocades, Murano lamps, and lanterns for the Sultan's barge), architectural drawings that are no longer extant may have flowed in both directions." When Mihrümah passed away, her impressive treasury of gold objects and jewels was sold for cash at the Covered Bazaar.

From books to Chinese porcelain, we know the accumulated wealth and valuables of Ottoman royal ladies and deceased or disgraced notables to have routinely reverted to the sultan – if they were not converted immediately into cash. But concretely speaking, there are only a few extant estate records of the Ottoman court from before the seventeenth century, and almost no studies on them.[12] Confiscation-related inventories, as well as princesses' probate inventories, proliferated in the eighteenth century, which may be why there have arisen some dubious assertions about increased material wealth and consumption in this period. All in all, at the moment it remains difficult to see an Ottoman counterpart to the wealthy Italian aristocrats, bankers, and merchants that patronized the Renaissance, as the luxury goods that the Ottoman dignitaries commissioned, collected, and consumed, and also hoarded in the stone chambers of their palaces, can neither be located nor documented in full.[13]

When we look lower down and at simpler things, on the other hand, there seems to be less of a gap, if any. The lack of estate records for fifteenth-century Mamluk and Ottoman cities (apart from Bursa) is later more than remedied by a wealth of inventories from cosmopolitan centers, smaller towns, and even villages. For Istanbul by the early sixteenth century, listed items of bathing and sleeping reflect a preoccupation with hygiene, comfort, refinement, and taste in the capital's homes. Even in modest households, a multitude of towels, wraps, bath bowls, clogs, and toiletry boxes stand witness to a developed material culture of personal cleanliness. And even a carpenter traveling alone in 1521 who fell overboard from a ship passing through the Bosphorus and drowned is found to have had a bar of soap among the few personal effects that he carried with him, which consisted almost entirely of his work tools (Seng 1991: 90–91). The same goes for a material culture of sleep – an amplitude of bedding (i.e., fabrics laid above the mattress for hygiene, warmth, and decorative effect) and bed clothes, ranging from night clothing to bed socks, attest to notions of well-being and aesthetic concerns in the early modern Ottoman home. The wealthier the deceased, the more such items turn out to be embroidered, displaying gold-and-silver hand work. The counterpart of the kind and level of comfort provided by beds, tables, and chairs in European domestic interiors was bolsters and cushions, spreads on sofas, and curtains for walls, doors and windows, and floor carpets and flat-weaves.

What is striking about Ottoman inventories of upper class men and women is that nearly all objects of luxury and status are from the east of the Ottoman Empire, namely from Syria, Iran, and India. Nevertheless the late sixteenth-century author

Mustafa ʿÂli (1580s) does mention, in addition to carpets from Ottoman Egypt and Safavid Iran, European chiming clocks among items of upper-class conspicuous consumption, as we shall see below. Another source from around the same time is the 1588 probate inventory of Ali Çelebi, an Ottoman gentleman in Buda, Hungary (Artan forthcoming; Fekete 1960).[14] Extensive and remarkable in scope, it gives us an image of a material man who enjoyed hygiene, comfort, refinement, and a pleasurable life. He was keen on dressing up. Exceptionally for the late sixteenth century, even his cellar was inventoried, and its contents further attest to his cultivated tastes as well as his ability to procure valuable, rare, or exotic commodities. Further still, he seems to have had a cabinet of curiosities where he kept naturalia, memorabilia, and mirabilia together with his specimens of taxidermy, astronomical instruments, and more than 120 manuscript volumes. Ali Çelebi also owned collectors' items – both antiquities and contemporary art, exemplified by ancient coins and ornaments, calligraphy and decoupage art, as well as a scroll by the eminent calligrapher Ahmed Karahisari (d. 1555), who penned a monumental Qurʾan for Süleyman I.[15] While men of Ali's standing were often interested in books, writing equipment, and objects of curiosity, it is nevertheless rare enough to find these in such quantity and quality in any one individual's possession. To find them side by side with an attraction to both the finest weapons and refined toiletry (ranging from musk-scented soaps in the dozens, and perfumed waters and oils, to quantities of kohl for darkening his eyebrows or eyelashes) is more than rare.

As the Ali Çelebi inventory also indicates, commodities imported from overseas had long played a key role in the expansion of consumption, as they did also in the construction of status and respectability. A distinct and significant cultural norm, the possession of imports was central to the definition of gentility (even if they came from a short distance). However – and this is what makes Ali exceptional – their availability was limited. A century earlier in Bursa, Mahmud Çelebi (d. 1488), a gentleman who was one of the five sons of Hacı İvaz Paşa (the famous statesman of Murad II and also the celebrated architect of the Green Mosque; see Yürekli, CHAPTER 29), possessed rich furnishings and several rugs including three European imports, an exceptionally well-equipped kitchen where fine ceramic plates were listed together with two European ones, and an impressive cellar stuffed with sugar, jams, and syrups. He even had a pricey falcon listed together with his three horses. Like Ali Çelebi, Mahmud appears as a man of exquisite taste which distinguishes him among a small group of taxpayers some of whom were twice as wealthy (Yılmaz 2002: 297–301). Thus in 1489, a considerably affluent man (a *hacı*) from Bursa appears to have only four pairs of embroidered towels from Siros island in the Aegean and some amount of thrown silk from Salonica as overseas items. Meanwhile, some rich merchants and craftsmen had only a few imported items for professional use. A confectioner (who, among many valuables, owned a book and a chess set), for example, possessed 15 (loaves) of European (Venetian?) sugar, clearly as raw material; a draper possessed 16 pairs of *Bulgarî*, referring to pieces of leather; a tilemaker had three Italian (*firengi*) molds. Similarly, in

1500 the imported items listed in four individuals' eye-catching inventories – a religious notable, a rich lady, a maker (or seller) of saddles and harnesses, and an architect – were limited to some garments plus a few metal bowls of Damascus and some Chinese porcelain and celadons.[16] Out of 3000 plus estates belonging to tax-exempt and wealthy military-bureaucrats from Edirne who passed away over 1545–1659, some tens of inventories point to well-furnished houses, comfortable lives, and curious people who had nurtured an interest in what was rare and beautiful (Barkan 1966). It is only very infrequently, however, that European imports like clocks, spectacles, spy-glasses, mirrors, or paper turn up in the inventories of these upper-class men or women who were certainly clad in heavy Italian or Ottoman brocades and velvets with gold or silver thread.[17]

Conclusion: Moral Strictures and the Public Order

As part of the cultural turn in Renaissance studies, recent discussions have focused on the definition, meaning, and associations of "material value" in the late fifteenth century. During the Renaissance, there was always a conflict, a tug of war between political competition, through a worldly search for beauty of representation, inevitably on the basis of enormous spending, and the reactions that such "un-Christian" ambitions provoked – between the Borgia popes and Savonarola, for example. But more than architecture, sculpture, or paintings, it was domestic artifacts that provoked anxiety over sinful luxury and extravagant expenditure. In his *De splendore* (1498), the Naples-based humanist Giovanni Pontano dealt critically with domestic displays of wealth. It has been argued that this was not a description of actual practice or a manual of behavior but a rhetorical exercise based on literary models. Nevertheless, it provided a way of formulating modes of "splendor" that allowed a new class of wealthy administrators in the kingdom of Naples to express their elite status without suggesting that they belonged to the "royal aristocracy" (Welch 2002). There was, in other words, a question of limited display – of just how much ostentation was permissible for a particular class that would nevertheless know its subordinate place and stop short of transgressing against the established order.

Interestingly, there are precise parallels to all this in the Ottoman world. Late in the sixteenth century, the aforementioned bureaucrat and historian Mustafa ‘Âli (d. 1600) wrote three books on court life and culture: *Nushatüs-selâtîn* (Counsel for Sultans, 1581), *Kavâʿidül-mecâlis* (The Etiquette of Salons, 1587), and *Mevâʿidün-nefâʾis* (Table of Delicacies, 1599). Together they constitute a guide to the mental determinants of material culture and consumption. In his *Etiquette*, for example, Mustafa ʿÂli provides a long list of objects that reads like a catalogue of elite consumption (Tietze 1982). He then says that it would be an act of "audacity" for "men of lower status" to presume to use them – in which case "sharp-tongued critics will lash them and will punish them severely" for their abuse. The goods and practices denounced include

> velvet and brocade, gold-embroidered beauties like the gold brocade made in Istanbul, in particular, jackets of sable and lynx fur, belts set with jewels, gem-studded daggers and knives are not proper for anyone but for high notables and privileged personages. Especially Persian and Egyptian rugs and carpets, gold-laced and gold-embroidered sofa spreads, precious cushions and table mats,//silver basins and candlesticks, gilded platters, silver censers, likewise golden and silver pen-and-ink case, gilded chiming clocks – to decorate [their dwellings] with these and their likes and to gain fame [in this manner], moreover [to dress] their servants, menials and dependents in princely garb and turbans that would befit the great and the *seyyids* – especially if these are rouges from the Balkans (Potur) or boors from Anatolia (Türk), and if what they wear from head to foot are sable and lynx fur coats covered with gold brocade. (Tietze 1982)

As part of this inventory of social taboos, Mustafa ʿÂli also lists saddlecloths embroidered with needlework, gem-encrusted girths, and certainly, gold-decorated horse harnesses, jeweled stirrups, shields dripping of sweet-smelling oil, six-edged battle-axes, precious swords, and claims that all these have to remain "the privilege of those glorious ones at the highest peak, the vezirs and generals of wide fame." Now if we abstract from quality or from materials of production, these last objects (i.e., saddlecloths, harnesses, stirrups, shields, battle-axes, or swords) were to be found – and in considerable numbers, too – in many modest to affluent urban households. Hence it seems that the prevailing opinion about luxury as a class privilege had to do with aspects like the skilled workmanship or materials that went into the making of such objects, resulting in their distinction, rarity, or even uniqueness.[18]

In Mustafa ʿÂli's case, this hierarchical approach is also extended to considerations about the right size of residential space. Enumerating numbers of rooms as a criterion, he divides the salaried classes into four (viz., the bureaucracy, the military, the judiciary, and the functionaries of the imperial palace) and argues that everybody's living quarters must be consistent with his status.[19] He thereby provides us with his personal vision of the existing social hierarchy. In Andreas Tietze's study of Ottoman gentlemen's perceptions of luxury and status symbols, there is the intimation that Mustafa ʿÂli was not just making an ethical case against luxury in general. An urban Ottoman was expected to manifest a sober approach to worldly possessions, but this had to be balanced against the contradictory public and political expectation for great men to actually display grandness through luxury. As a result, Mustafa ʿÂli came to emphasize a cautious approach to life, prudence in climbing the social ladder, guarding against excessive ambition, allowing for sudden changes in fortune, and not engaging in any excessive displays of wealth or ambition that might trigger envy, or by violating class lines might endanger the existing class structure.

These were typical, indeed conventional words of wisdom that continued to enforce conformity through the ages. A century after Mustafa ʿÂli, the court chronicler Naʿima (d. 1716) wrote critically of the sheikh ul-Islam Karaçelebizade's (off. 1651) imposition of an overtly sensual type of loose trousers (*çintiyan*) on his servants, and more generally the diffusion of what he described as an over-ornate and wasteful style of dressing among lower status groups. Elsewhere, Naʿima complained about an excess of luxury imports, and also kept gossiping about those viziers whom he regarded as poorly and/or flamboyantly dressed and who thereby attracted properly slanderous nicknames. At the same time, he absolutely stressed the royal, dynastic need for luxury. He conceded that a distinction had to be made between private spending and public forms of expenditure associated with the virtue of magnificence. But moralizing preachers' attacks on luxury or extravagance were suspect. The fundamentalist Vanî Efendi (d. 1685), for example, who rejected any innovation departing from the times and example of the Prophet Muhammad in order to argue vehemently for a rigidly austere way of life, was himself – Naʿima tells us – much given to luxury (Naʿima 2007: 1712, 1799–1800).

Such discursive similarities persist relatively deep into the early modern era, which may be a significant point in itself. In the period between1600 and 1800, when European societies, politics, and cultures were transformed, leading to growth, prosperity, and stability, a whole range of new commodities, including mostly commercial goods like sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, and cotton, began to be imported over huge distances in large quantities and at falling prices. They all became staples of daily life among people of great and modest substance, and even among those with lesser means. As indicated earlier, some Ottomanists caught up in the first wave of consumption studies have seen this development as spilling over to an eastern Mediterranean supposedly languishing until then in relative poverty, passivity, and stagnation. This in turn is why they have latched on to the so-called Tulip Age (1718–1730) as the allegedly first-ever example of an Ottoman consumer society, described through clichés of "pleasure-seeking," "free-spending," "breaking with tradition," and "looking for novelties."

How new it actually was or not, has to be rethought through a deeper exploration and assessment of the earlier phase between 1450 and 1650 that has been the subject of this chapter. In particular, what should we make of the difference between the somber conclusions deriving from studies of written texts and the often more cheerful views of cross-cultural exchange that emerge from studies of material artifacts? This is a major task for future research.

Notes

1 Several rock crystal pitchers and jugs in the Topkapı Palace collection, which belong to a group with distinctive handles (rectangular in section and angular in profile), were identified by von Falke (1934) as fourteenth-century Burgundian. They may have been made in Venice, Prague, Germany, or south Italy. Compare with: Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul. Inv. Nr. : 2/471 (with a silver-gilt foot and dragon-shaped gold

spout); and V&A Museum, London. Inv. Nr.: 15-1864 (with silver-gilt and enamel mounts, probably Paris, 1340–1350).

2 Al-Qaddumi (1994) explored a 1406 copy of the eleventh-century treatise which records largesse distributed by the caliphs and sultans and their counterparts, which came into the possession of an Ottoman statesman Gedik Ahmed Paşa, grand vizier (1474–1477) and grand admiral (1478–1482) of Mehmed II and Bayezid II (Gedik Ahmed Paşa Library, Afyon Karahisar, Umumi 702).

3 No sixteenth-century clocks have survived in the Topkapı Palace, and very few elsewhere in Europe. Their machinery was so complex that it was easier and cheaper to commission a new clock than to find a clockmaker to repair broken ones.

4 An incomplete Ottoman register (D. 10734), studied by Genç (2011), records the booty from the Safavid court and reveals a wealth of blue-and-whites as well as celadons.

5 Maria Pia Pedani and Antonio Fabris have reflected on the Venetian–Ottoman diplomatic gift exchange in a number of articles.

6 Koch (1988) has explored the two techniques of inlay work, stone *intarsia* and *commesso di pietre dure*, and their use at the Mughal court. Shah Jahan's patronage was a determining factor in the development of Mughal stone inlays. From the 1630s on, Florentine workshops dealing with semiprecious stones concentrated more and more on mobile decorative objects like cabinets and tabletops which were also exported or presented as gifts to other rulers. No example of such *pietre dure* panels, bearing birds, flowers, or flower vases, have been located in any Ottoman collections.

7 Also in the 1490s, a book in Latin written about Cem's life and published in several European cities included many accurately described representations of costumes, weapons, and domestic items. It was illustrated by Guillaume Caoursin, vice-chancellor of the Knights Hospitaller. For Prince Cem at the dinner given in Rhodes by Pierre d'Aubusson, grand master of the Knights Hospitaller: woodcut retrieved from the Ulm edition (1496) of *Obsidionis Rhodie Urbis Descriptio*, fol. 35r. http://www.warfare.altervista.org/15/Caoursin-ORUD-35r.htm (accessed 2 February 2017).

8 The Sultaniye kiosk had figural lacquered window shutters and a painted lacquerwork wooden door depicting the victory at Çaldıran, and the kiosk of the Karabali garden featured a "kunstliche Tafel" celebrating the same victory. Necipoğlu (1991, 2012) pointed to the possibility of their transfer to Istanbul after Selim I conquered Tabriz and Sultaniye in 1514.

9 The Ledger (*Libro dei Conti*) of Giacomo Badoer, a Venetian nobleman and commercial banker who lived in Constantinople for more than three years (in 1436–1440) and enjoyed a comfortable if not luxurious life, sheds light on the possessions of such temporary residents. He seems to have brought relatively little with him to the Byzantine capital. Basics such as linen and kitchen equipment, as well as a large bed, table, and chest(s) were purchased locally. Badoer did not take any great interest in (Mamluk) carpets, limiting himself to purchasing two lots of three each, which he shipped to Venice on Florentine vessels. Neither did he acquire rugs for his personal use. All this may reflect nothing more than the difficulty of finding rugs and carpets on the market (Bertele and Dorini 1956). The inheritance inventories of Ottoman merchants, like that of Hüseyin Çelebi from Ayaş (near Angora/Ankara) who was murdered in the Serenissima in 1575, which is testimony to the prominence of mohair

cloth (camlet) trade over the Mediterranean in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, also reveals the material culture of the traveling merchants and their expectations of domestic comfort (Kafadar 1986). His personal effects included clothing appropriate for long-distance traveling: a few spreads and cushions, stationery, some weapons, and a rich variety of cooking items which led Kafadar to identify him as a gourmet. He also had a taste for opiates. His wealth, choices, and preferences, however, were not going to help him to find a private dwelling to settle comfortably – both Muslims and Christian merchants from the Ottoman lands had to share halls and sleeping chambers in places such as the Fondaco dei Turchi.

10 Gorton (2013: 154, 158) notes that Fakhr al-Din also asked Ferdinando II's help in supplying Florentine artists, such as the architect and sculptor Francesco Cioli, to assist with civil construction, perhaps with the reconstruction of his palace at Deir al Qamar or at his winter palaces in Beirut and Sidon – if not with forts, canals, bridges, or fountains.

11 Necipoğlu (2005: 270, 281, 299) has taken note of the material riches of these three royal ladies in the context of their palaces and pious foundations.

12 Raby and Yücel (1986) have provided a partial list of the sixteenth-century postmortem inventories of royal ladies and state functionaries. At a first glance, they have listed only jewelry, items that were commonly recycled or redistributed and which therefore cannot be traced in the archives or in museums.

13 Necipoğlu (2005: 316) quotes Mustafa ʿÂli's list of Rüstem's possessions at his death in 1561. In addition to cash, slaves, horses, and camels, there were: "80,000 turbans, 5,000 kaftans and robes of honor, 1,100 gold caps, 209 arms, 2,000 armors and cuirasses, 500 jewel-inlaid gold saddles, 1,500 silver-gilt helmets, 130 pairs of gold stirrups, 760 gilded swords, 1,000 silver-gilt rapiers and 32 priceless jewels." These were probably received as gifts or tributes or booty, and were accumulated for later distribution as gifts. Although Ottoman etiquette expected displays of pomp and grandeur from dignitaries, personal attitudes, dispositions and peculiarities were also important. According to Bailo Bernardo Navagero, though the miserly Rüstem "appreciated all kinds of presents, he did not care much for jewels" (Necipoğlu 2005: 315). Does this explain the meager number of jewels in the above list? Another example concerns Semiz Ali Paşa (d. 1565), the grand vizier who followed Rüstem in office. His parting gifts to Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the Austrian Habsburg ambassador (1554–1562) were "three well-bred horses, a 'really beautiful' robe interwoven with gold thread, a box containing an antidote from Alexandria for poison, and a glass vessel filled with balm worthy of an 'allied prince.'" All of this was rather routine. In return, however, he requested from Busbecq "a coat of mail of a size to fit his tall and stout frame, a sturdy charger to which he could trust himself without fear of a fall (for he has difficulty in finding a horse which is equal to his great weight), and lastly, some bird's-eye maple, or similar wood, such as we use for inlaying tables" (Necipoğlu 2014: 327). The last item is interesting given the scope of such exchanges. Unfortunately, Ali Paşa's estate was also converted into cash immediately after he passed away: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi KK 1767, fol.2b. Necipoğlu (2005: 333ff) has shed light also on the riches of the next grand vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (d. 1579), put on display in the palaces he built and furnished with his royal wife.

14 Despite the sheer numbers of the sixteenth-century Ottoman postmortem inventories, studies on them are still quite few. Ali Çelebi's material wealth can be compared to some affluent residents of Edirne (Barkan 1966) and also with Carlo Helman, a merchant of Flemish origin in Venice, whose 1606 inventory lists an impressive amount of Ottoman artifacts including a range of weaponry, luxury riding equipment, a female dress, and a costume album (Thornton 1997: 78, 80–82). Compare also with the art collectors in Mantua (Rebecchini 2002).

15 The five gold pieces minted by the last Khwarazmshah Jalal al-Din (d. 1231) testifies to his antiquarian impulse.

16 Özdeğer 1988: 187–189, 191, 195–196, 200–201, 213–214, 221–223, 229–230, 232–233. The estates of some other wealthy men, such as a *kebabçı*, a tanner, a grocer, and a *seyyid* – a descendant of the Prophet – do not reveal any imports at all (Özdeğer 1988: 192–193, 197–199, 202–203, 213). Both İnalcık (1969: 109) and Faroqhi (1995, 2000), who have intensively studied late-fifteenth century inventories from Bursa, noted Mahmud Çelebi as a wealthy man but did not elaborate on the scope of his material possessions.

17 New research on seventeenth-century Bursa and Edirne estates, at the moment mostly in the form of a few unpublished thesis or dissertations, do not reveal a profound change in the scope of the material possessions of the Ottoman elite. They abound in textiles for bedding, bathing, and interior decoration, and often include exquisite dining sets and kitchen equipment. The number of inner and outer garments in store may vary according to the character and status of the deceased. See footnote 14 above.

18 Necipoğlu (2007: 19–21) discusses these three hierarchical quality levels and materiality together with the decorum of décor. She also explains the concept of decorum in residential architecture and the graded ranking of luxury goods (2005: 115–117, 120).

19 Necipoğlu (2005: 115–124) has elaborated the shared concepts of "decorum and magnificence" in Vitruvius and Renaissance treatises of architecture like those of Alberti, Serlio, and Palladio.

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36

Safavid Arts and Diplomacy in the Age of the Renaissance and Reformation

Part 1: The Safavids and Their Neighbors: The Movement of Objects

Massumeh Farhad

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as the Safavids were competing for political, economic, and religious power with the Ottomans and Mughals, objects became a potent form of cultural currency to further their causes. Luxuriously illustrated and illuminated manuscripts, gold and silver vessels, bejeweled arms and armor, and sumptuous velvets and silks were exchanged as gifts, taken as booty, or bought and sold as coveted commodities. These objects circulated within the realm of each empire and beyond, and their meanings were revised, modified, and transformed, often lending them new histories and biographies. The phenomenon was neither unique to this period nor to the interactions of the Safavids and their Ottoman and Mughal neighbors, but it played a critical role in consolidating political and economic relationships, disseminating artistic ideas, and formulating new visual identities for the three early modern empires.

Shah Ismaʿil I: Appropriation of the Past

The Safavids entered the political arena when the future Shah Ismaʿil I (r. 1501–1524), the scion of a Shiʿi Sufi order centered in Ardabil, left Gilan in 1499 to take advantage of the internal strife that had plagued the Aqqoyunlu or "White Sheep"

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Turkmen dynasty. He swiftly gained control of Azerbaijan and in 1501 triumphantly entered the Aqqoyunlu capital Tabriz in northwestern Iran. Ismaʿil I crowned himself king, minted coins in his name, and declared Twelver Shiʿism as the new state religion, thus ushering in a new phase in the political, religious, and cultural history of Iran. For the next 13 years, the young monarch, fuelled by messianic zeal, succeeded in securing control over the remaining Aqqoyunlu territory in the west and over Herat, the last bastion of Timurid power in the northeast that had briefly fallen to the Uzbeks.

The early years of Ismaʿil I's reign were a period of ruthless territorial conquest. The new shah also began forging a cultural and artistic identity for his dynasty by drawing on the legacy of his predecessors. After all, his mother was the daughter of the Aqqoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan (r. 1453–1478), and Ismaʿil I spent some six years (1493–1499) in Gilan at the court of the local Turkmen ruler, Sultan ʿAli Mirza Karkiyar, a sojourn that was critical to his education and cultural outlook. By choosing Tabriz, the former Aqqoyunlu capital, as his seat of government, Ismaʿil I succeeded in maintaining a sense of continuity with the Turkmen past, appropriating the city's rich cultural heritage, while also imposing a Safavid political and religious order on his new domain.

In Tabriz, Ismaʿil I came into possession of the Aqqoyunlu royal library and its rich holdings. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the city had served as the capital of the Ilkhanids, the Jalayirids, and the Turkmen Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu dynasties; hence, the royal library must have included a wealth of illustrated and illuminated manuscripts and other rare treasures. These objects both lent the new dynasty cultural status and power and helped determine the direction of its visual identity. Just as Ismaʿil I employed Turkmen officials to administer his realm (Mitchell 2012: 46), local Tabrizi artists, together with others who had been relocated from conquered cities, such as Shiraz, Isfahan, and Baghdad entered his employment (Dickson and Welch 1981: vol. 1, 30).

The Timurids played an equally if not more important role in the shaping of the dynasty's artistic identity. Already in the winter of 1504, Sultan Husayn Bayqara (d. 1506), threatened by the growing Safavid power, sent an embassy to Ismaʿil I bearing rare and precious gifts. Following the Uzbek conquest of Herat in 1507, Badiʿ al-Zaman, the last Timurid ruler, took refuge at the Safavid court, first in 1508–1509 and again in 1513–1514. When Ismaʿil defeated the Uzbeks in 1510 and conquered the former Timurid capital Herat, Tabriz became the destination of other Timurid princes, poets, artists, and craftsmen, who brought along some of their most valuable belongings (Dickson and Welch 1981: vol. 1, 239, n. 5). It is against this political backdrop that a new Safavid artistic idiom was forged, one that synthesized Turkmen and Timurid ideals, infusing them with distinctive Safavid and Shiʿi nuances. Moreover, this new language spread well beyond the Safavid borders and played a decisive role in the artistic formations of both the Ottoman and Mughal empires, where it was adopted, transformed, and integrated into their respective dynastic image.

Ismaʿil's conscious appropriation of the cultural and artistic past is evident in his patronage. Instead of creating new illustrated texts for the young monarch, court painters completed earlier Turkmen and Timurid manuscripts. Key among these is a copy of the celebrated *Khamsa* (Quintet) by the poet Nizami (d. 1209), which was started for the Timurid prince Abuʾl Qasim Babur ibn Baysunghur (d. 1456) (Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H. 762). Elaborated under the Aqqoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan at the behest of his son Sultan Khalil (d. 1478), it eventually came into the possession of the Aqqoyunlu ruler Yaʿqub Beg (d. 1490). In 1505, Ismaʿil I added 10 illustrations to the text, a gesture that not only linked his name to that of the other eminent royal bibliophiles but also bestowed on the manuscript an explicit Safavid identity (Stchoukine 1966: 3–16). Painted in an exuberant Turkmen style, the figures don the distinct Safavid headgear. Known as the *taj-i haydari*, literally the "crown of Haydar" referring to Ismaʿil's ancestor, the headgear stands out for its tall red or black grooved baton, which rises from a cap, around which the turban was tied. Figures wearing the *taj* also people the Safavid illustrations of a copy of the *Dastan-i Jamal u Jalal* (Story of Jamal and Jalal), which had been copied in 1502 in Herat (Uppsala University Library, no. O Nova 2). This and other volumes may have arrived in Tabriz with Muhammad Husayn, the son of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, when he revolted against his father and took refuge at the Safavid court in 1504 (Dickson and Welch 1981: vol. 1, 239, n. 5).

Reliance on Timurid and Turkmen forms and technique is also evident in the three-dimensional works that have survived from the early sixteenth century. A popular shape was the Timurid bulbous jug. One of the most celebrated examples is executed in jade, a material favored by the Timurids with their sinicizing Mongol heritage. Inlaid with gold filigree, the elegant vessel bears an inscription with Shah Ismaʿil I's name (Topkapı Palace Museum, 1844). Other objects, such as a remarkable belt, made in 1507–1508 for Ismaʿil I and a contemporaneous armband by a certain Nur-allah (Figure 36.1) as well as a small silver and zinc bowl (Topkapı Palace Museum, 2/2869) further illustrate Safavid continuation of late fifteenth-century aesthetics and craftsmanship at the highest level. The most notable additions again were figures wearing the *taj-i haydari*, the Safavid emblematic identity marker, as seen on the royal belt and the zinc bowl. An inkwell in the shape of a tomb tower, dated to 1513, underscores Safavid religious identity in its inscription, which calls upon the first Shiʿi imam ʿAli for help and protection (Victoria and Albert Museum, 1365–1904). Such Shiʿi invocations became increasingly popular on later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century metalwork, silks, and carpets and functioned as portable expressions of Iran's newly adopted religion.

Ismaʿil I also used objects as an effective diplomatic tool to consolidate his power and negotiate with his adversaries. When the Portuguese occupied the island of Hormuz in 1515, he offered Admiral Alfonso Albuquerque gold jewelry and precious silks in silver wash basins; in 1512–1513, the Mamluk ruler Qansuh al-Ghawri received in addition to seven cheetahs in silk jackets, arms and armor as well as gold and silver dishes (Allan 2003: 203–204).

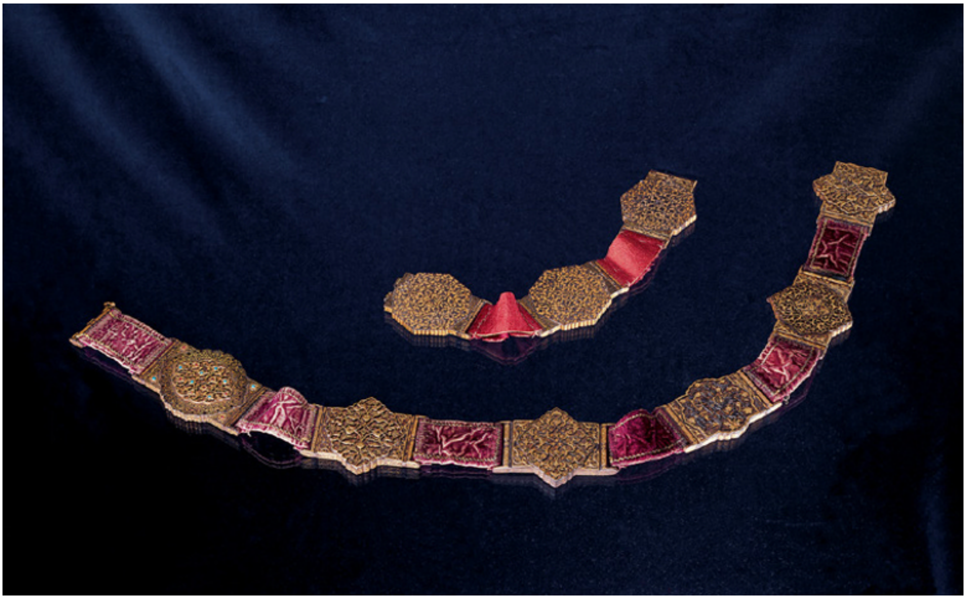

Figure 36.1 Belt, Iran, Safavid period, dated 1507–1508, iron, gold, rubies, turquoise, velvet; Istanbul. Source: Topkapı Palace Museum, inv. No. 2/1842.

In 1514, the Ottomans defeated the Safavids at the battle of Chaldiran and stemmed the tide of Isma'il I's territorial advances. The confrontation marked a military turning point for both powers and had a profound impact on the artistic and cultural landscape of the early sixteenth century. Sultan Selim I's forces occupied Tabriz for only three weeks, but they left with countless treasures, which transformed Ottoman aesthetics just as it had done Safavid visual culture. Objects associated with Isma'il I and particularly those inscribed with his name carried rich symbolic associations as trophies commemorating Ottoman success against the Safavids and, by extension, Shi'ism. They continued to be valued among the Ottomans for the next several decades as potent reminders of the momentous battle (Arcak 2012: 226).

According to historical sources and Ottoman wage registers, numerous artists and craftsmen were also relocated from Tabriz to Istanbul. The most renowned were employed at the Ottoman royal workshops and helped forge a new pictorial language that became synonymous with the empire's formidable political and economic power in the early sixteenth century. A wage register dated 1526 includes tilemakers from Khurasan in eastern Iran whom Isma'il I had resettled in Tabriz after his conquest of the Timurid territory. Attached to the *ehl-i hiref-i hassa* (royal craftsmen) in Istanbul, these men introduced new techniques, such as the *cuerda seca* (dry cord) method as well as gilded underglaze blue and white tiles, as seen in the magnificent panels of the Circumcision Room (Sünnet Odası) in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul. The same register also mentions 26 Iranian painters.

The highest paid among them was Shah Quli, who has been credited with developing the so-called *saz* style, characterized by sinicizing compositions of fantastic vegetation and imaginary creatures, executed in sweeping, undulating lines (Necipoğlu 1990: 148). Shah Quli was probably also responsible for the extraordinary designs of the five pictorial panels for the Circumcision Room. A document dated 1527–1531 shows that he also prepared designs for court carpets in addition to illuminating a copy of the *Yusuf va Zulayhka* (Joseph and Zulaykha) by the fifteenth-century poet Jami (Necipoğlu 1990: 150; Necipoğlu 2007: 15–16).

Ottoman illustrated manuscripts, such as a copy of the *Mantiq al-tayr* (Conference of the Birds) by Faridun ʿAttar, dated to 1515 in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (E.H. 1512) or the *Divan* (Collected Poems) of Sultan Selim I, attributable to 1515–1520 (Istanbul University Library, F. 1330) now incorporated idealized compositions and rich surface textures inspired by fifteenth-century Persianate painting tradition (Bağcı *et al.* 2010: 56–67). Similarly, Ottoman objects in jade and metal emulated Timurid shapes, while sumptuous textiles carried intricate designs and motifs, recalling Iranian and Central Asian models. Safavid appropriation of Timurid–Turkmen aesthetics and Ottoman exposure to fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Persianate pictorial ideals prompted the efflorescence of a highly refined "international" visual idiom that predominated in both Safavid Iran and the Ottoman lands for the next several decades.

Shah Tahmasp: Forging of a New Visual Identity

With the accession of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576), the Safavid artistic canon moved into a new more mature phase, as it did in the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566). Before assuming the throne at the age of 10, Tahmasp had served as governor of Herat from 1516 to 1522, where he also received his formative education. Steeped in Timurid learning and culture, Tahmasp became an avid bibliophile, painter, and calligrapher. Not surprisingly, during his reign the arts of the book reached the highest level of technical and artistic refinement and best exemplify the new Safavid aesthetics.

Knowledge about manuscript production, however, remains scant and clearly depended on a variety of factors, such as the status of the patron, the team of artists, and the type and scale of a project. The finest volumes were usually produced at the royal library-cum-workshop (*kitabkhana*), where codices were both created and stored. The number of masters working in the royal library probably changed depending on the scale and complexity of projects. The monumental copy of the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) prepared for Tahmasp in the 1520s and 1530s required countless artists, who were employed at different times to work on various aspects of the project. Once the manuscript was completed, some artists stayed on and contributed to other volumes, while others sought employment elsewhere (Canby 2003a: 83).

Some royal painters and calligraphers joined the workshops of Safavid princes and powerful governors; others emigrated to join the ateliers of Ottoman or Mughal patrons and further disseminated artistic ideas associated with the Safavid court. In 1544, the second Mughal ruler, Humayun (r. 1530–1540 and 1555–1556), arrived at the Safavid court to seek military support against the Shir Shahs, who had wrested control of his young Indian Empire. Claiming descent from the Timurids, the Mughals viewed themselves as the rightful heirs of Timur's political, cultural, and artistic legacy. During their stay in Iran Hamida Banu, Humayun's sister, acquired large numbers of Timurid manuscripts for the Mughal library (Soudavar 1999: 49), while the Mughal ruler sought Tahmasp's permission to invite several Safavid royal artists to his court. In 1554, Humayun returned to India with reinforcements to recapture Agra and Delhi and with a number of renowned painters, including Mir Sayyid ʿAli and ʿAbdul Samad. Mir Musavvir and his son Mirza ʿAli also left for the Mughal court. These Safavid masters joined forces with local artists and, inspired by newly arrived European works of art, synthesized a pictorial language that became synonymous with the power and cosmopolitanism of the Mughal dynasty (Soudavar 1999: 50–51). India remained a magnet for subsequent Safavid painters, calligraphers, and skilled craftsmen, who migrated east and trained new generation of artists in the fundamentals of Persianate style and aesthetics (Soucek 1987: 175–179).

It was Ottoman taste for Safavid illustrated and illuminated texts that spurred production in cities such as Shiraz during much of Tahmasp's reign (Uluç 1999, 2006). Ironically, the demand for luxury manuscripts intensified during the Ottoman–Safavid conflicts between 1534 and 1555, and again between 1578 and 1590. With Persian as the *lingua franca* of the Ottomans, members of the elite amassed Persian literary classics, such as the works of Firdawsi, Nizami, Saʿdi, and Jami for their own collections or donated them to libraries attached to madrasas. On special occasions, they exchanged literary works among themselves or presented them to the sultan as in the case of the circumcision ceremony of Prince Mehmed in 1582 (Uluç 1999: 96).

The city of Shiraz was one of the main centers for manuscript production intended for export. The sixteenth-century historian Budaq Qazvini remarks that within many Shirazi households (prior to 1576), women were copyists (*katib*), their husbands were painters (*musawwir*), the daughters served as illuminators (*muzahhib*), and the sons as binders (*mujallid*) (Akimushkin and Ivanov 1979: 50). Thus, a single family could produce any kind of text within a year. This unusual description, perhaps more characteristic of provincial workshops, suggests the development of a Safavid "cottage industry" for the creation of certain types of manuscripts.

The intermittent political and religious rivalry between the Safavids and the Ottomans during Tahmasp's reign also resulted in the defection of several high-ranking individuals, who arrived with invaluable offerings. These carefully selected gifts serve as symbolic indices of the rank and status of both donors and recipients, their relationship as well as respective expectations. On the Safavid side, chief among the defectors was Alqas Mirza (d. 1548), one of Tahmasp's brothers, who took refuge at the court of Süleyman I in 1547. Treated with the greatest respect, Alqas was received with a spectacular procession and was showered with the most precious gifts from the Ottoman sultan and members of the elite. These included gold and silver vessels, fur-lined kaftans and other sumptuous textiles, as well as Arab horses with bejeweled harnesses (Arcak 2012: 87–88). In return, the prince had arrived with some of his finest manuscripts and a number of administrators, including Eflatun Shirvani, who collaborated with Arif Çelebi, the royal historian (*şehnameci*) to compose a *Shahnama* in Persian of the Ottoman sultan in the style and meter of Firdawsi's epic. The five-volume manuscript presented to Süleyman in the mid-1550s became the model for the genre of Ottoman *Shahnama*s in general (Bağcı *et al.* 2010: 102–107; Tanındı 2000: 149). In 1548, Alqas joined a campaign against his brother Tahmasp and plundered the cities of Hamadan, Qum, Kashan, and Isfahan. His booty of exceptional manuscripts and countless other treasures became part of the ever-growing collection of works from Iran in the Ottoman royal treasury and library.

When Süleyman's rebellious son Prince Bayezid sought refuge at the Safavid court in 1559, the Ottoman ruler increased the number and scale of embassies to the Safavid court to convince Tahmasp to return the prince. One such embassy comprised some 700 men and carried an array of lavish offerings for the Safavid ruler. These included bejeweled weapons and rarities from Europe and other parts of the world as well as some 40 Arab horses with saddles of gold and brocaded horse blankets, suggesting both Ottoman wealth and sophistication (Arcak 2012: 32; Monshi 1978: vol. 1, 192). Eventually, these embassies achieved their goal. In 1562 Tahmasp handed over Bayezid to the Ottomans, who summarily executed him and his children.

For the Safavids, as well as the Ottomans and the Mughals, perhaps the most desirable and lucrative commodities were silks, which reached their technical and artistic pinnacle in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see Denny, CHAPTER 37). Used for both clothing and furnishing, bales of silk and velvet were part of every embassy, while robes of honor (*khilʿat*) were regularly distributed to local officials, foreign ambassadors, and other dignitaries as a sign of royal favor and recognition. Already in 1509–1510, Ismaʿil I recognized the importance of textiles and established 33 workshops for silk and cotton weavers and for tailors to supply his court in Tabriz (Scarce 2003: 320).

In Iran, silk was cultivated in the northern provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran and was manufactured locally in several cities, chief among them Yazd and Kashan. Much of Iranian silk was exported, and one of the major markets was the city of Bursa in northwestern Anatolia, where it supplied the flourishing Ottoman silk-weaving industry. The remainder was exported to Europe via Bursa, especially to Italy. In the sixteenth century, the silk sporadically fell victim to the Ottoman–Safavid rivalry, which interrupted its export through Anatolia and impacted both the Ottoman and Safavid economies. Blockades encouraged Tahmasp to seek alternative routes to the Mediterranean, such as through Mamluk Egypt and Syria, which proved unsuccessful. It was not until the reign of ʿAbbas I (1587–1629) that other outlets, such as a southern route via the Persian Gulf and a northern one by way of the Caspian Sea and the Volga basin provided more viable alternatives (Mathee 1999: 18–20, 27–32).

Much of the information on the uses and designs of sixteenth-century Safavid textiles is derived from contemporary paintings and drawings, which depict different types of cloth, from elaborate turbans and belts to embroidered costumes, curtains, and floor coverings. The production of silks, especially patterned ones, known as lampas, and velvets was extremely complex and time consuming and depended on the skills of the *naqshband*, who was responsible for translating a flat design into a three-dimensional scaled model on a draw-loom (Thompson 2003: 275–276).

Safavid textiles were brilliantly colored with hues ranging from flaming red, bright orange, to pink, straw, and green. Unfortunately, much of the color has faded over time. The designs include stylized floral and vegetal motifs, figural compositions of elegantly dressed, idealized men and women, or real and fantastic animals in combat. Some of the same imagery also adorns both the borders and covers of contemporaneous manuscripts, suggesting that the artists drew on similar motifs. Other textiles show elaborate narrative scenes, such as the spectacular coat in the Kremlin State Armory, decorated with a repeat design of a man throwing a rock at a menacing dragon (no. 25668 okhr.). The same composition appears on an ogival velvet fragment originally part of a tent, confirming the weavers' reliance on a shared repertoire of subjects, which they adopted to different techniques (Figure 36.2). One of the notable characteristics of these silks is the staggering of the repeat design to avoid the impression of a straight line (Thompson 2003: 281). Safavid figurative textiles probably also inspired some of the late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century examples that were favored at the Mughal court (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M73.5.702). However, they were not exported to the Ottoman world. Here, figural compositions were confined to works on paper, and textiles were decorated with floral or boldly stylized geometric motifs, except for ecclesiastic robes (Kremlin Armory, TK-2208). On the other hand, Ottoman silks and velvets were popular at the Safavid court. According to the historian Iskandar Munshi, when the Mughal emperor, Humayun, arrived in Iran to seek refuge, Tahmasp welcomed him with Ottoman textiles among many other gifts (Monshi 1978: vol. 1, 164; Thompson 2003: 312, n. 39).

Silk and wool carpets were the other desirable Safavid commodities. As in the case of other luxury goods, some of these carpets must have been produced at royal *karkhanas* (workshops) or to court standards, while others were manufactured commercially. Nomadic carpets must have also existed, but no extant examples

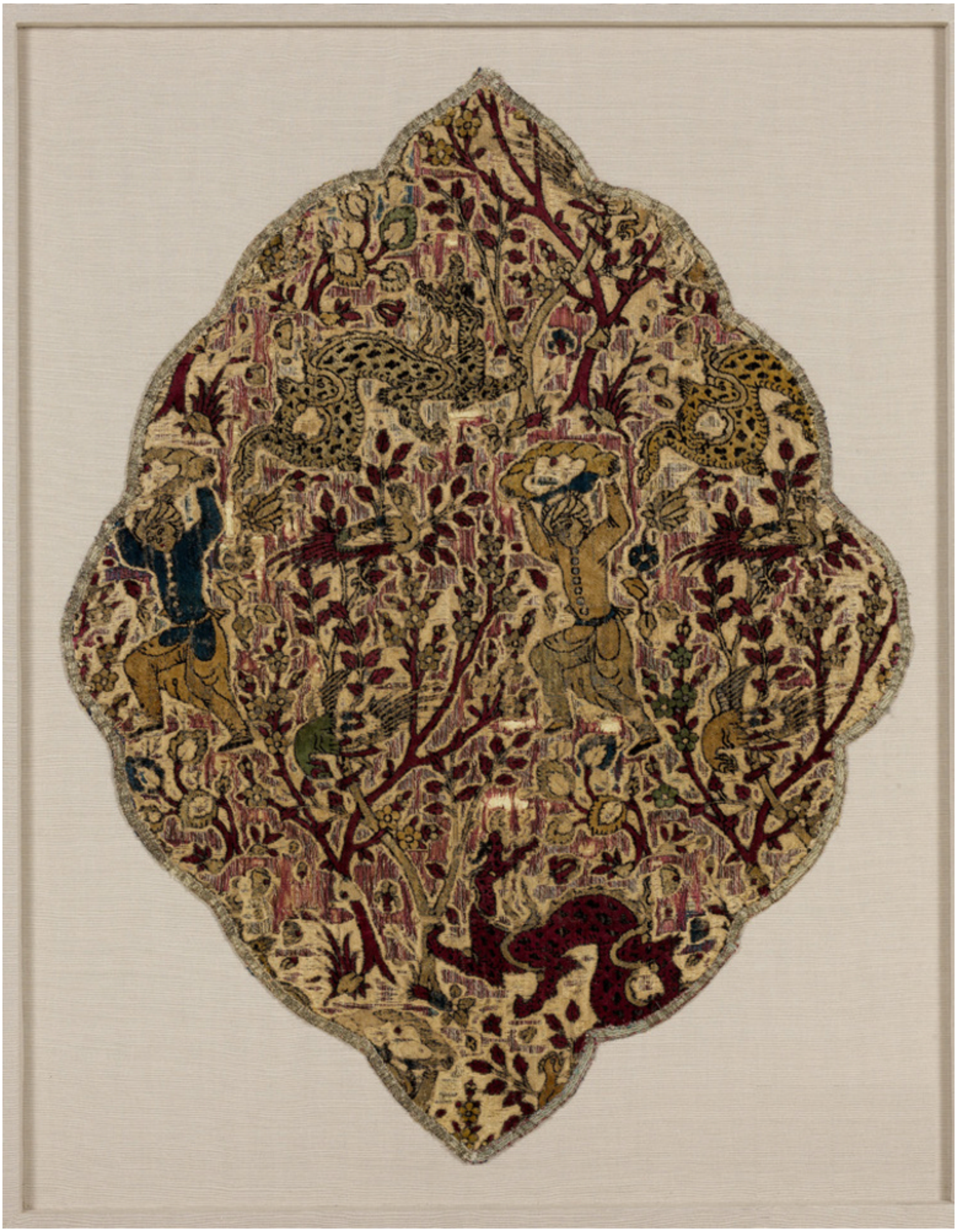

Figure 36.2 Textile fragment, Iran, Safavid period, *c.* 1540, silk; cut and voided velvet with continuous floats of flat metal thread. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of V. Everit Macy 1927, 27.51.1.

are known from the Safavid period (Walker 1990: 867). Like sixteenth-century silks, carpet designs recall certain compositions found in contemporaneous manuscripts. They include one or more multipointed medallions, fantastic animals in combat (Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, T.100), or galloping horsemen (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 66.293; Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, d.t.1) among other motifs. The designs of Safavid carpets tended to be irregular, which suggest that the weavers followed sketches and drawings rather than a precise knot plan (Thompson 2003: 287).

Some Safavid carpets must have been exported to India, or else émigré weavers introduced Persian designs to the Mughal court, for early Indian carpets also incorporate real and fantastic animals in combat, hunting scenes, and other human activities (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; C328). Like early Mughal paintings, however, the compositions show a greater degree of naturalism than their more stylized Safavid counterparts.

Only three sixteenth-century Safavid carpets are signed and dated. The most celebrated among these are the two Ardebil carpets, signed by a certain Maqsud of Kashan and dated to 1539–1540, which are now split between the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (272-1893) and the Los Angeles County of Art Museum (53.50.2). Knotted in wool on silk warps and wefts, both carpets show the same design, centered on a medallion surrounded by pendants. The carpets have been cut down, but it has been proposed that if placed side by side, the two could have covered the floor of the *Jannatsara* (Abode of Paradise) in the Ardebil shrine complex, the Safavid ancestral shrine in northwestern Iran. This domed chamber was added to the Ardebil shrine during Tahmasp's reign, perhaps to commemorate his victories over the Ottomans in 1536 (Rizvi 2011: 85–89, 91–93).

Sixteenth-century Safavid carpets were extremely expensive and cost almost three times as much as their Ottoman counterparts (Hallet 2006: 79). Their high price meant that originally only the most affluent could afford them. With the growing wealth and expanding maritime power of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, it is not surprising that Iranian carpets began arriving at the court of Queen Catarine of Portugal (1507–1578), one of the most active collectors of Oriental "exotica" in the sixteenth century. By 1558, the Portuguese royal collection had acquired some 17 Safavid carpets, including several made from gold, silk, and wool, and others with elaborate hunting scenes. As one of the most desirable commodities from the East, other members of the Portuguese elite emulated the court and purchased equally rare Iranian carpets for their residences (Hallet 2006: 40–45). It was not, however, until the reign of ʿAbbas I that Safavid carpets were made for large-scale export, unlike their Ottoman counterparts that flooded European markets from the late fifteenth century onwards (Necipoğlu 2007: 19).

The technical sophistication and intricate design of Safavid carpets meant that they became among the most coveted gifts in the Islamic world. During the construction of the Süleymaniye mosque complex in Istanbul (1558), Tahmasp offered to send Süleyman a carpet large enough to cover the entire prayer hall

(Necipoğlu 2005: 67). The gesture was promptly refused and Tahmasp ended up sending a more appropriate and less conspicuous gift of three Qurʾans. Precious silk carpets, however, were included in most of the 27 Safavid embassies that arrived in Istanbul between 1514 and 1600 (Uluç 1999: 91).

In 1567, Shah Tahmasp sent an embassy, headed by Shah Quli Khan, to the Ottoman court, to pay tribute to the new sultan Selim II (r. 1566–1574). In preparation, the Safavid ruler spent some eight months supervising the composition and production of his letter to Selim (Soudavar 2002: 103–105). The embassy included 400 officials, 320 merchants, who usually accompanied such delegations in the hope of securing favorable commercial terms, and 700 pack animals (Tanındı 2000: 147). Forty-four camels were necessary to carry the royal gifts alone. These included a pear-sized ruby, two large pearls, horses, saddles, porcelain plates, and a tent with a gold-embroidered ceiling, some 20 silk carpets, and 40 falcons. The two most important gifts were a copy of the Qurʾan, allegedly written by imam ʿAli, the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, and set in a bejeweled binding, and a volume of Firdawsi's *Shahnama*, which was none other than the celebrated Tahmasp *Shahnama*, one of the finest illustrated manuscripts ever produced (Arcak 2012: 54, 66–67; Komaroff 2011: 17–19). Selim II's reception of the Safavid embassy and the abundant gifts have been meticulously recorded, both visually and verbally in the *Shahnama-i Selim Khan*, a chronicle of Selim II in Persian (Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 33595, f. 53v–54r), underscoring the importance of the event. At this time, the Safavids also returned the possessions of Prince Bayezid, Selim II's murdered rebellious brother, as further affirmation of the new Safavid–Ottoman relations.

In 1576, Ismaʿil II, Tahmasp's successor, sent an embassy to congratulate the Ottoman sultan Murad III on his accession. The gifts included jewels, silk carpets and textiles, several copies of the Qur'an, set in gem-studded bindings, some 50 Persian literary works, another copy of the *Shahnama*, and a much admired tent. A painting of the Safavid embassy and its gifts to Murad III, including one depicting the erected tent, entered the first volume of the sultan's official chronicle in Persian, the *Shahanshahnama* (Istanbul University Library, 1404, ff. 41v–42r; 43v). Completed in 1581, the illustration and list of objects underscore the importance of such missions and the power of the Ottoman sultan as the recipient of precious ambassadorial gifts (Arcak 2012: 113–124). The embassy helped to fulfill another critical function for the Safavids. When Ibrahim Mirza, the shah's nephew asked him why he was sending these irreplaceable manuscripts to the Ottomans, who would not appreciate their value and beauty, Ismaʿil II responded, "I need peace and security, not books and manuscripts that I never read nor see" (Soudavar 1992: 250). Although Ismaʿil II's reign only lasted a year, his poignant comment further attests to the critical political and diplomatic role of objects among these rivaling empires. Just as Süleyman I's overtures and generosity towards Tahmasp secured Bayezid's return, Safavid embassies to the Ottoman court, following the 1555 treaty of Amasya, guaranteed peaceful relations until 1578.

Shah ʿAbbas I: Disseminating a Vision of Power

When ʿAbbas I ascended the Safavid throne in 1587, the Ottomans were once again threatening western Iran while the Uzbeks were encroaching on the eastern borders of the Safavid domain. Simultaneously, the Turkmen Qizilbash tribes were in revolt and jeopardizing internal stability. In 1590, ʿAbbas I made peace with the Ottomans, but not without considerable territorial loss; he also defeated the Uzbeks in 1598–1599 and re-established Safavid control over Khurasan. Another important development at this time was ʿAbbas I's establishment of the slaves of the royal household (*ghulam-i khassa-yi sharifa*). Comprising Armenian, Georgian, Circassian Christians prisoners, and other conscripts, the corps became an effective political counterbalance to the powerful Turkic Qizilbash. Many *ghulam*s also became leading patrons of art and architecture, both in the provinces and in the new Safavid capital, Isfahan established in 1590–1591. With the help of the *ghulam*s and other members of the ruling elite, ʿAbbas I transformed Isfahan into the symbol of his political, military, religious, and economic ambitions (Babaie 2004: 80–114). In addition to monumental public and private buildings, he used objects to cultivate and disseminate his political vision and strength both within the Safavid territory and beyond.

By the early seventeenth century, the number of diplomatic missions between the Safavid and Mughals had increased because of their mutual claim to the strategically located city of Qandahar, in present-day Afghanistan, which had been captured by the Mughals in 1594–1595. Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) sent an envoy to the Safavid court in 1603–1604. Among the numerous gifts for the shah, a sword belonging to Timur, the founder of the Timurid dynasty, and a coat of arms, made of gold and studded with small diamonds, stood out. While accepting the sword as an auspicious omen, ʿAbbas I kept the envoy waiting for four months before inspecting the rest of the gifts, which he then promptly distributed among his governors. Such a dismissive gesture, clearly expressing Safavid displeasure over the occupation of Qandahar could not have been lost on the Mughals (Monshi 1978, vol. 1, 837–838; Canby 2003b: 61). ʿAbbas I's reception of the Mughal envoy stands in sharp contrast to Tahmasp's personally orchestrated lavish receptions for Humayun, who sought refuge in 1544 at the Safavid court (Thackston 2011: 184–185).

In 1609, ʿAbbas I dispatched Yadegar Beg to the Mughal court to congratulate Akbar's successor, Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) on his accession to the throne. The envoy was accompanied by 50 of the finest horses from the Safavid stable, brocaded and velvet horse blankets, Russian long-haired fur coats, satin and velvet fabrics, including European and Chinese examples. In 1611, Yadegar Beg left the Mughal court, accompanied by Jahangir's close companion, Khan ʿAlam for Safavid Iran. After two years, the Mughal embassy finally arrived in Qazvin. In addition to some 800 men, the delegation included, "ten elephants with gold howdahs and embellished with all kinds of gold trappings, and a variety of animals, including tigers, leopards, antelope, Indian lamb, cheetahs, rhinoceroses, talking birds, and water-buffalo, which pulled various types of litter" (Monshi 1978: vol. 1, 979–980). Clearly, the mission was intended to dazzle the Safavids with India's material wealth and economic power. According to the court chronicler Iskandar Munshi, however, ʿAbbas I was more interested in going hunting in Mazandaran, and "the baubles of the world were not so important to the Shah as to justify his spending several days of his valuable time inspecting them." He gave the Mughal ambassador Khan ʿAlam a day to present a selection of the finest gifts from Akbar, a deeply distressing slight to the ambassador (Monshi 1978: vol. 1, 1159–1160). Once again, ʿAbbas I's dismissive attitude and his carefully staged reception of the Mughal envoy was intended to send a strong message of displeasure. Khan ʿAlam's visit to Iran has also been memorialized in a series of Safavid and Mughal paintings, but none includes the gifts as in the Ottoman illustrations of the Safavid embassies (Robinson 1972: 58–63).

Capitalizing on Iran's relative peace, both internally and externally, ʿAbbas I begun to forge new diplomatic and commercial relations with both Europe and Russia. This strategy did not only bolster the country's economy by opening up new markets and lessening its dependence on Ottoman merchants and trade routes; it also encouraged the arrival to Iran of European merchants, diplomats, missionaries, and adventurers with new and exotic goods.

Textiles, especially silks and carpets, reached new levels of importance as the most important Safavid export. In 1604, ʿAbbas I chose a suburb of Isfahan, which became known as New Julfa, to resettle the Armenian population of Julfa, an area that he had returned to the Ottomans. Many of the Christian Armenians already enjoyed strong commercial ties to Europe and were ideally suited to engage in trade on behalf of the Safavids. As an incentive, the shah granted the Armenians monopoly of the silk trade, which proved to be highly lucrative for both parties. Consequently, silk became the backbone of the Safavid economy (Mathee 1999).

In the seventeenth century, the production of figurative silks and velvets, which had begun under Tahmasp, continued to flourish. The velvets that once lined the interior of Rosenborg Castle in Denmark illustrate both the transcultural mobility of Safavid textiles and their transformation in the process. Instead of cutting and fashioning them into coats or hangings as originally intended, the velvet panels were used to paper the walls of a palatial interior, thus acquiring a new meaning and function in their European context (Bier 1995). The appearance of signatures on some Safavid textiles, such as those of Giyath al-Din ʿAli Naqshband, a skilled weaver and companion of the shah, confirms the growing importance of textiles, as a valuable commodity and a prized art form both in Iran and abroad (Skelton 2000: 248).

Carpets, too, became a principal export during ʿAbbas I's reign. In order to compete with the Ottomans and meet the increasing demand for Safavid carpets in the West, weavers had to introduce certain modifications. While they continued to produce red-ground carpets with meandering floral and tendril motifs, dotted with stylized buds, the overall design became larger and lacked the detailed patterns and tight knots of earlier examples. The changes enabled the Safavid weavers to speed up production and increase the size of individual carpets, which were now often made in pairs. These carpets, which have survived in considerable numbers in European collections, appear in many Portuguese paintings as symbols of wealth and prestige. They are often referred to as "Indo-Persian" because of some uncertainty about their place of production. The confusion stems from the fact that similar carpets were also made in India and shipped together with Safavid examples to Europe to meet the increased demand. Based on technical analysis, it is now possible to differentiate the Safavid from the Mughal examples (Cohen 2006: 123–130).

The similarity of seventeenth-century Mughal and Safavid designs was not limited to carpets. By the 1640s, more naturalistic floral motifs appeared in Persian silks, while Safavid painters, such as Shaykh ʿAbbasi and Bahram Sufrakish began to appropriate Mughal and Deccani formal conventions to lend a sense of space and volume to their work. Concurrently, some of the early seventeenth-century Mughal figurative velvets were still indebted to Safavid models. These artistic developments attest to the continuous flow of goods, artists, and craftsmen across the Mughal–Safavid border, encouraging experimentation with new formal and stylistic norms in both India and Iran to satisfy local and international markets.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Safavids further expanded their repertoire of carpet design (Figure 36.3). The so-called Polonaise carpets derived their name from a Polish coat of arms on one of the examples. Consequently, the carpets were believed to be from Poland, but they are Safavid in origin and were probably created in Isfahan. Some 200 examples, primarily in European collections, have survived and embody a different Safavid aesthetic. Although their colors have largely faded, these gold and silk carpets tend to favor more muted and pastel hues, reminiscent of the tiles covering the Shaykh Lutfallah Mosque in Isfahan, completed in 1617–1618 or some of the tile revetments in the ʿAli Qapu Palace (1622). Their overall design is primarily floral, but unlike the uniform red ground of other Safavid carpets, the ground color varies from one design unit to the next, creating a distinct visual effect. As the "gold" and "silver" threads were made up of a silk core wrapped with gilded foil, they tended to unravel easily. Coupled with the fragility of silk carpets in general, their shimmering effect was probably relatively short-lived but quite extraordinary when new (Thompson 2003: 76–77). After the mid-seventeenth century, the production of the gold and silk carpets appears to have ceased, but they were still desirable among the European elite and were exchanged as gifts.

A group of distinct prayer rugs, referred to as "Salting carpets," after a British collector, represent another late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century Safavid carpet type. Today, some 35 examples are housed in the Topkapı Palace Museum, which originally led scholars to identify them as Ottoman. Their main

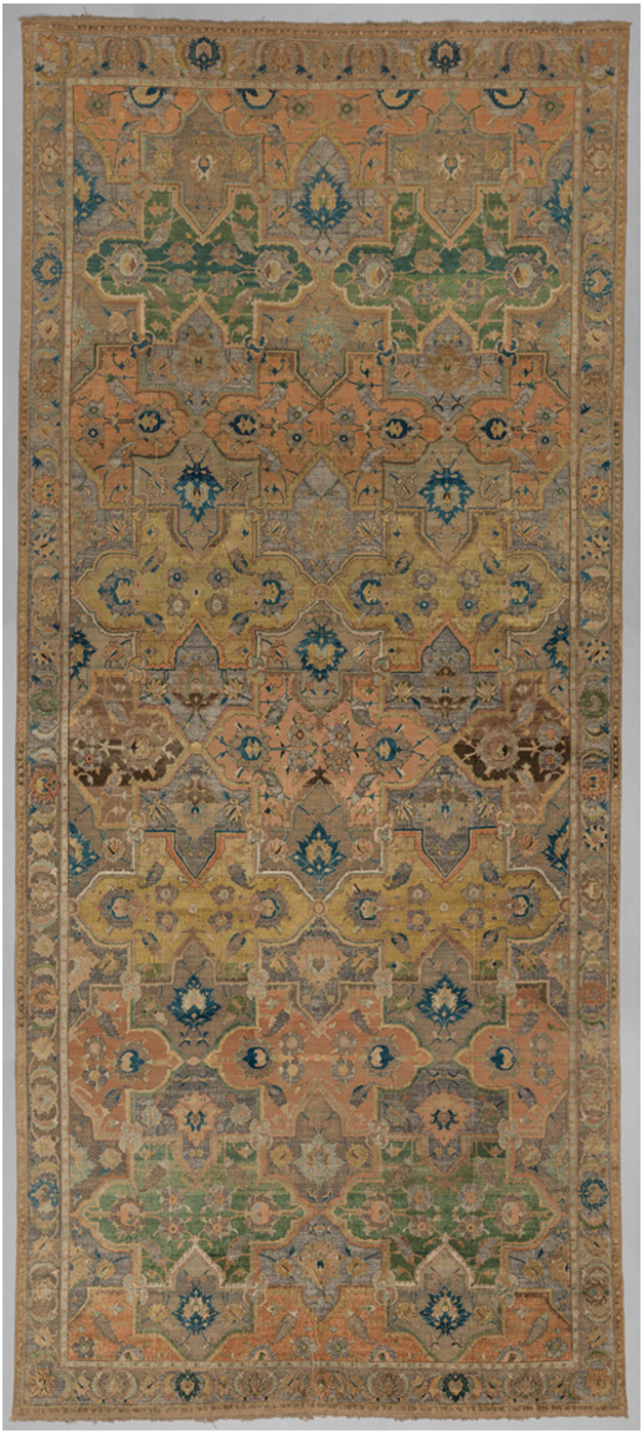

FIGURE 36.3 Polonaise carpet, Iran, Safavid period, seventeenth century, cotton (warp and weft), silk (weft and pile), metal wrapped thread. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr. 1950, 50.190.1.

decorative feature consists of a niche with spandrels in a color different from the central field. All the rugs include Qurʾanic inscriptions and Shiʿi invocations, which rules out an Ottoman origin. Probably sent with one or more of the Safavid embassies, the prayer rugs may have been intended as a "subversive" gift, much like a velvet robe, embroidered with a figure wearing a *taj-i haydari* that had been sent earlier (Topkapı Palace Museum, 13/2088-35/465). Judging from their brilliant colors and fine condition, the Ottomans probably never used these carpets (Thompson 2009: 80).

The Safavids also continued the Timurid practice of collecting fine Chinese porcelain, an interest they shared with both the Ottoman and Mughal ruling elite. Since the fifteenth century, Chinese luxury ware was emulated in the production of local blue-and-white, which functioned as less costly domestic substitutes. Both European and Persian sources identify the city of Kirman as the center for the finest Safavid ceramics, but Tabriz, Nishapur, and Mashhad were also known for their production. In the early seventeenth century, imported examples of Wanli ware introduced a new type of Chinese design to Iranian potters. Named after the Chinese emperor Wanli (r. 1573–1620), the vessels are characterized by compartmentalized border designs and loosely painted landscape scenes in the center. They were also known as "Kraak" ware after the carracks, the ships that carried them to Amsterdam. When the Chinese kilns of Jingdezhen temporarily stopped producing ceramics in the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company, which had now replaced the Portuguese as the dominant seafaring power, substituted Chinese porcelains with Safavid examples in Europe (Golombek 2003: 253–254; Golombek 2014: 21–22).

In 1608, when Safavid potters were producing Chinese inspired ceramics according to local taste and demand, ʿAbbas I decided to endow the royal collection of Chinese porcelain, which had been amassed over several centuries, to the Ardebil shrine. To accommodate some 1500 pieces, he transformed one of the rooms at the shrine into a *chini-khana* (house of china) by creating a series of ceramic-shaped niches, similar to those found in Isfahan's ʿAli Qapu Palace (Rizvi 2011: 144–155). The endowment also included several hundred of the finest historical and literary manuscripts. The transfer of these works helped to bolster the importance of the Safavid ancestral shrine, the core of the dynasty's religious identity, especially in the eyes of the Ottomans, who had been defeated by the Safavids in 1603.

Another type of Safavid ceramic ware first appeared in Europe in the late nineteenth century. Referred to as "Kubachi" after a village in the Caucasus, where many of them were discovered, they comprised underglaze painted turquoise and black vessels with stylized vegetal designs as well as a distinct polychrome ware that recalls Ottoman Iznik ceramics. These Safavid vessels have been traditionally associated with the city of Tabriz in northwestern Iran, but recent scholarship has concluded that they were created in Isfahan, at the village of Qumisheh. Potters probably began producing them shortly after 'Abbas I moved the capital to Isfahan in the late sixteenth century. The Isfahan polychrome wares incorporated bright

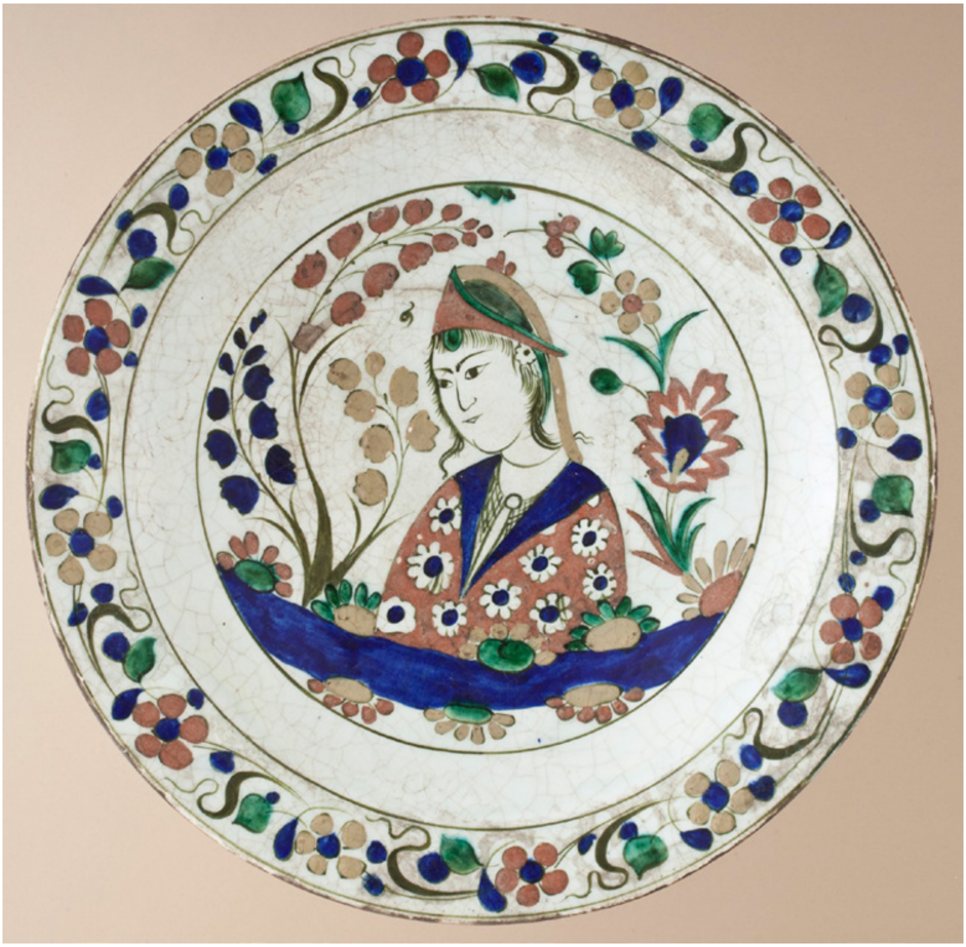

FIGURE 36.4 Plate, Iran, Isfahan, early seventeenth century, stone-paste painted underglaze. Source: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection, gift of Joan Palevsky M.73.5.380.

colors, including a red slip, and certain vegetal and floral motifs that also appear on Iznik vessels (Golombek 2014: 170–181). In addition, some of the Safavid examples are decorated with figural compositions that echo the style of the celebrated Isfahani painter, Riza-yi ʿAbbasi and his circle (Figure 36.4). The overall design and execution, however, tend to be more spontaneous than the carefully finished Iznik wares. It is still unclear when so many of these vessels arrived in the Caucasus, but their presence suggests their popularity and circulation beyond a strictly local market long after their creation in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Safavid relations with Russia during the reign of ʿAbbas I perhaps best exemplify Iran's new political and commercial outlook. By the early seventeenth century, the threat of Ottoman expansion encouraged Iran and Russia to establish closer relations (Mathee 1994: 744–748). Russia became an important destination for Safavid (and Ottoman) silk and also served as a conduit to the Baltic and northern European markets, an alternative to the land route through Anatolia. In order for the Safavids to nurture political and commercial relations with their northern neighbor, they exchanged numerous diplomatic missions with the Russians in the seventeenth century. These embassies were frequently headed by wealthy and influential merchants and served as disguised trade delegations to avoid tariffs and other forms of taxation. Many of the merchants were Christian Armenians, who controlled the Safavid silk trade and who also forged ties with the Orthodox Church. The Ottomans, too, were cultivating relations with the Russians primarily to acquire fur, the sale of which was a royal monopoly. While both the Safavids and Ottomans coveted Russian raw materials, especially rare furs, such as sable and mink, in exchange they sent textiles, carpets, arms and armors, horse trappings, and portable luxury objects. Some of the gifts were delivered on behalf of the shah to the tsar, such as the magnificent seat sent in 1604 by ʿAbbas I to Boris Godunov (Kremlin State Armory, inv. no. R-2). The gold, bejeweled chair, the only extant example of a type that was often included in Persian paintings, conveys as much about Safavid power and wealth as it does about its recognition of Russian royal authority.

The Safavids (and the Ottomans) also maintained relations with Russia's religious elite by sending regular gifts to the Russian patriarchs. One such object was a gold staff, a gift from ʿAbbas I to the patriarch Filaret in 1629 (Kremlin State Armory, inv. no. DK-840). Merchants, too, forged strong ties with the Orthodox Church as part of their efforts to solidify their growing economic relations. According to Russian records, in 1617 the merchant Muhammad Qasim presented a fine, bejeweled Safavid dagger to tsar Mikhail Fedorovich, which was kept in the repository for the ceremonial regalia of the Russian tsars (Kremlin State Armory, inv. no. OR-208/1-2). In addition, traders presented large quantities of textiles and other luxury goods to the patriarch to obtain lucrative trade concessions. In time, these objects transformed Russian taste and aesthetics as artists and craftsmen began to assimilate Safavid and Ottoman formal vocabulary and techniques into their work (Arthur M. Sackler Gallery 2009: 106–128).

Following ʿAbbas I's death in 1629, his successors continued to maintain Safavid diplomatic and commercial contacts with their Ottoman, Mughal, and Russian neighbors. Although embassies carrying luxury objects crossed borders and were used as important diplomatic tools, the political landscape in the later seventeenth century was gradually changing. The relative peace with the Ottomans and Mughals after the middle of the century, coupled with flourishing relations with Europe and the influx of western goods and visitors, meant that the Safavids began to engage more regularly with Europe. By then, the Ottomans and the Mughals had also fully assimilated earlier Persianate and Central Asian aesthetic canons and had forged their own distinct visual and dynastic identity, thus leaving behind the formative period of Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal artistic relations of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Acknowledgments

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Safavid Arts and Diplomacy in the Age of the Renaissance and Reformation

Part 2: The Arts of Gifting between Safavids and Habsburgs

Marianna Shreve Simpson

For centuries within Islamic courtly cultures, the giving and receiving of gifts was an integral part of diplomatic, political, economic, and social interaction and served a variety of critical purposes, ranging from rewards for loyal service and signs of both princely ambition and esteem on the one hand to bribes and tribute on the other. The types of items appropriate to give and to receive were equally diverse, and included rare or prized animals, elegant robes and other rich textiles, and portable objects in precious materials and artful forms. Scholarly attention to this fascinating subject has taken as its point of departure notions of the gift first formulated by the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, then refined within diverse historical and cultural contexts, and more recently applied to ancient near eastern and Islamic civilizations (Feldman 2006; Komaroff 2011; Mauss 1950). The present contribution looks at the history of gift exchanges, particularly those involving luxury items, between Iran and various European powers in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and specifically during the reigns of the Safavid shah ʿAbbas I of Iran (r. 1587–1629), the Habsburg king Philip III of Spain and Portugal (r. 1598–1621), and the Habsburg and Holy Roman emperor (hereafter Austrian Habsburg) Rudolph II of Hungary, Croatia, Bohemia, and Austria (r. 1576–1612). Its goal is to better understand the formalized and institutionalized practices of gift giving in both Iran and Europe and the place and purpose of gifts in international discourse.

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Whatever the specific episodes and circumstances, the gift exchange story forms part of the larger, complex history of relations between Iran and western Europe during the early modern period, relations that were driven by the search for strategic diplomatic and commercial alliances, primarily in opposition to the Ottoman Empire, through the intermediary of diverse envoys and embassies.[1] This broad context also includes the preconceptions that Safavid monarchs had of their European counterparts and vice versa and the extent to which those perceptions informed or dictated expectations about gifts and counter gifts.[2]

After decades of episodic contact, the long reign of ʿAbbas I ushered in a new and dynamic era in Iranian–European relations, as part of the shah's strategic policies aimed at consolidating and centralizing royal power, restoring Iran's territorial integrity, and revitalizing its economy (Floor and Herzig 2012: 22–28, 358–359; Newman 2009: 50–72). Not only did ʿAbbas receive many embassies directly from Western powers, but he also sent his own missions to European capitals – a significant development in the geopolitical activity of early modern Iran.[3] The most frequent exchanges were with Portugal and Spain, since 1580 consolidated under Spain's Habsburg dynasty, and the Austro-Hungarian realms ruled by the Austrian Habsburgs. The typical mission, whether from east to west or west to east, was as much about trade as about politics, and involved adventurers, merchants, and clerics as well as actual diplomats, all of diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, on more than one occasion ʿAbbas "deputized" European envoys to serve as his own agents, generally in tandem with Iranian representatives, on missions abroad.

Among the first Westerners bearing gifts for ʿAbbas was the English soldier of fortune Anthony Sherley, who arrived in the company of his brother Robert and other companions at the Safavid court in Qazvin in December 1598 (Langer 2013: 78–99; Parker 1999: 61–82). While very far from being an official representative of a sovereign power, Sherley did follow correct protocol in bringing gifts for ʿAbbas, describing them as

> six pairs of pendants of exceedingly fair emeralds, and marvelously artificially cut; and two other jewels of topazes, excellent well cut also; one cup of three pieces, set together with gold enameled; the other a salt, and a very fair ewer of crystal, covered with a kind of cutwork of silver and gilt, [in] the shape of a dragon (all of which I had of that noble Florentine) which His Majesty accepted very graciously. (Parker 1999: 66)

While overall these presents for ʿAbbas were limited in number and type, the Italian origin of the three-piece cup, the salt cellar, and the ewer is noteworthy and quite plausible, given that Sherley's entourage was briefly in north Italy in early 1598, where the Englishman could indeed have met a "noble Florentine."

In another travelogue, Abel Pinçon, Sherley's French steward, records that the Englishman also gave ʿAbbas a "number of girdles [i.e., belts] and pistols which he had brought from Alep [Aleppo], and an emerald pendant shaped like a grape," which gives us a better idea of what Sherley meant by "marvelously artificially cut" and perhaps also the actual number of pendants. Pinçon further notes that "the matchlocks of the pistols were inlaid with mother of pearl, but this present was not of much value." He was similarly disparaging of the gift that ʿAbbas in turn gave Sherley "thirty horses with their trappings of which two were of gold enriched with turquoises and rubies, but the rubies for the most part were not of much value." Two other members of the Sherley company were more impressed with 'Abbas's offerings, which included a very rich chair set with stone and the shah's own girdle (here doubtless meaning a Safavid-style sash) of golden cloth "very curious and costly" (Davies 1967: 107–108; Ross 1933: 98–136, 209–211) (Figure 36.5).

During his six months in Iran, Sherley succeeded in convincing ʿAbbas to join in an alliance with Christian powers envisioned as capable of bringing about the final downfall of the Ottomans. Towards that end, he persuaded the shah that he should represent Iran at more than a half-dozen European courts in negotiations about an anti-Ottoman military campaign. Sherley set out on this mission in July 1599 along with the Safavid courtier Husayn ʿAli Beg; both the Englishman and the Persian were designated as ambassadors and were accompanied by the Portuguese Augustinian friar Nicolau de Melo and dozens of other retainers (Flannery 2013: 49–53; Gil Fernández 2006: 79–142). ʿAbbas furnished this oddly assorted delegation with letters addressed to the pope and eight other European rulers. Furthermore, and again according to Pinçon,

> To each of the above-mentioned princes, he also sent nine scimitars, nine wrought and gilded bows with quivers and arrows of the same workmanship, nine pieces of material of which they make their turbans, called *seroiscia* or *cess*; nine girdles of pure linen in the Indian fashion; and nine more broad girdles made of wool of the goat which secretes within itself the Bezoar stone. (Ross 1933: 163–164)

In his subsequent account, the mission's Persian secretary Uruch Beg (later known as Don Juan of Persia following his conversion to Christianity) reported that the ambassadorial entourage set off from the Safavid palace in Isfahan with the presents carried by 32 camels and that the presents included pieces of brocade and cloth. This material, plus perhaps the turban cloth recorded by Pinçon, is likely to have consisted of silk textiles of the type being produced at the time in the royal workshops at Yazd, Kashan, Tabriz, Mashhad, and Isfahan (Floor 1999; Peck 2013: 74–75; Thompson *et al.* 2010). Uruch Beg also informs us that the company stopped for some days in the former Safavid captial of Qazvin in northwestern Iran, "for the Shah had ordered us to procure certain articles for gifts that we were to present to the kings of the Christians, these in addition to those with which from Isfahan we were already in charge" (Le Strange 1926: 235).

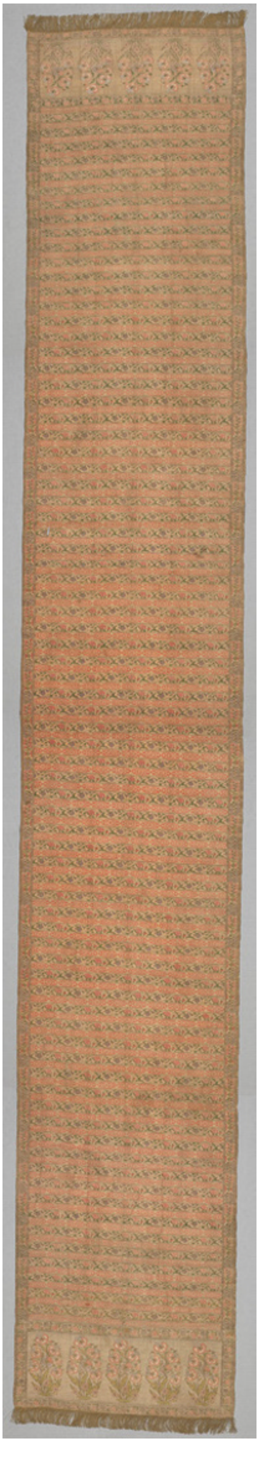

Figure 36.5 Sash, Iran (possibly Kashan), seventeenth century; compound plain weave, brocaded, silk and metal-wrapped thread.Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of George D. Pratt, 1933 33.80.18.

By November 1600 the Safavid company had reached Moscow, and from there proceeded to the port of Archangel where arrangements were made to sail on a chartered Flemish vessel to northern Europe.[4] But before they embarked, Sherley put the chests with presents (described by Uruch Beg as "valuable" and "of much magnificence" (Le Strange 1926: 238, 284)) on board an English ship, maintaining that their safe passage would be assured on this sturdier vessel. Unfortunately, the shipment never did reach its intended destination of Rome, and Husayn ʿAli Beg later charged that Sherley had sold or bartered away the gifts to the English sea captain, whereas Sherley argued that he had found them too trifling and that he had sent them back to Iran (Le Strange 1926: 284). One result of this debacle is that we are unlikely to ever know the full extent and contents of 'Abbas's gift assemblage for the princes of Christendom, although Husayn ʿAli Beg is reported to have deposited a list of the items, of which today no trace remains, at the Vatican upon his subsequent departure from Rome (Gil Fernández 2006: 123).

The incident also highlights the complicated and often fraught conditions that attended gift giving between Iran and Europe in the early modern period (Peck 2013: 76). No matter how well entrenched the protocol and how well meaning the motivations, the dispatch of gifts could easily be undermined or derailed while embassies were en route, particularly since the route was so long and, in the case of the Sherley–Husayn ʿAli Beg mission, the envoys so incompatible. So too, miscommunication and misunderstanding – sometimes genuine and sometimes contrived – between donor, intermediary, and recipient could create serious complications for an embassy's success, particularly when a real or presumed gift overlapped with a trade commodity. This is demonstrated by an oft-reported snafu that occurred over 10 years later during another mission from ʿAbbas to Europe led by the Turkmen Safavid courtier Denghiz Beg Rumlu and the Portuguese Augustinian friar António de Gouvea. Arriving at the court of Philip III in Madrid in 1611, the envoys presented the Habsburg monarch with various gifts, including 50 bales of highly prized silk. Philip accepted the silk as a present and in turn gave it to his queen, Margaret, who in her turn gave it to a chapter of the Augustinian order. In actuality, 'Abbas had intended the bales to be sold in Europe, and only Gouvea claimed that they were a gift for Philip, later producing a customs declaration to that effect. ʿAbbas was livid when he later learned what happened to his valuable merchandise, particularly since Philip had not sent him a return gift of comparable worth (Gil Fernández 2009: 217–222; Komaroff 2011: 126, 132; Matthee and Flores 2011: 260–261).

To return to 'Abbas's first fully fledged and official embassy led by Anthony Sherley and Husayn ʿAli Beg and with Uruch Beg as secretary: having made it across the North Sea, the party traveled on through Germany and reached Prague in October 1600. During their stay, the Habsburg emperor Rudolph II ordered his official engraver Aegidius Sadeler to create portraits taken "from life" of Anthony Sherley and Husayn ʿAli Beg (Figure 36.6 and Figure 36.7). These individualized images include inscriptions in Latin (and in one version also in Persian) with each ambassador's name and title. Several years later, two other Safavid ambassadors to Prague, Zeynal Khan Shamlu and Mehdi Quli Beg, had their portraits painted on vellum by the imperial court artist Esaye Le Gillon and engraved by Sadeler. The paintings were inscribed in Persian by the envoys themselves with the dates of their visits (Safar 1013/June–July 1604 and Rajab 1013/November–December 1604, respectively) and lofty encomia to both Rudolph and ʿAbbas (Langer 2013: 90–91 and figs. 1–5, 29–34).[5]

When Husayn ʿAli Beg and Anthony Sherley left Prague in 1601, Rudolph gave them gilt-silver services; the set for Husayn ʿAli Beg included two dishes with their pitchers, 12 small cups, six candelabra and six salts; that for Sherley also two dishes and pitchers, six large goblets and 12 small cups. The ambassadors' gentlemen received a silver goblet (Gil Fernández 2006: 102).[6]

The embassy pressed on to Rome, stopping in mid-March in Florence and then Pisa where Ferdinando I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, sent Husayn ʿAli Beg and Sherley on their way with his portrait medallion set in precious stones and hung on a fine and very long gold chain (Le Strange 1926: 283). Two months later in Rome Pope Clement VII gave a similar farewell present (i.e., a gold chain and portrait) to the Safavid ambassador and his secretaries. Presumably Sherley would have or did receive a comparable gift, but, according to Uruch Beg, Sherley and his men were nowhere to be found when it came time to leave Rome (Le Strange 1926: 286). Thus from early May 1601 the embassy consisted only of the Safavid emissaries, who made their way through Italy and France, and arrived in Spain in July. They spent the next two months at the Habsburg court in Valladolid; upon their departure Philip III gave Husayn ʿAli Beg a gold chain "of the weight of 500 crown," each of the three secretaries a chain worth 3000 reals, and the servants "other chains of lesser value." As Uruch Beg enthused, "this was indeed munificence worthy of the august bounty of his Catholic Majesty Philip III" (Le Strange 1926: 293).

ʿAbbas's first "bicephalic" embassy to Europe has rightly been judged both a success and a failure: a success because of the interest in things Persian that it aroused at certain European courts and a failure because it achieved little or no effective results (Gil Fernández 2006: 143). In terms of the history of Iranian–European gifting, the mission's outcome was also mixed, with the ambassadors and other members of the Safavid delegation receiving gifts of various types and values. Absolutely nothing, however, seems to have been offered as a present for ʿAbbas, an omission that may have been in direct reaction to the envoys appearing in Prague, Rome, and Valladolid essentially empty-handed.

That is not to say, however, that European monarchs were not mindful of the necessity of presenting gifts to Persian shahs. In a letter to the Portuguese viceroy in Goa dated 3 March 1603, Philip III mentions that he had sent a crystal chest of Italian origin from Cartagena (in southeastern Spain) to Lisbon, where it was being cleaned and prepared for shipment "with all due care to India, and [then to be] offered to the Shah of Persia." The chest apparently got as far as Hormuz and

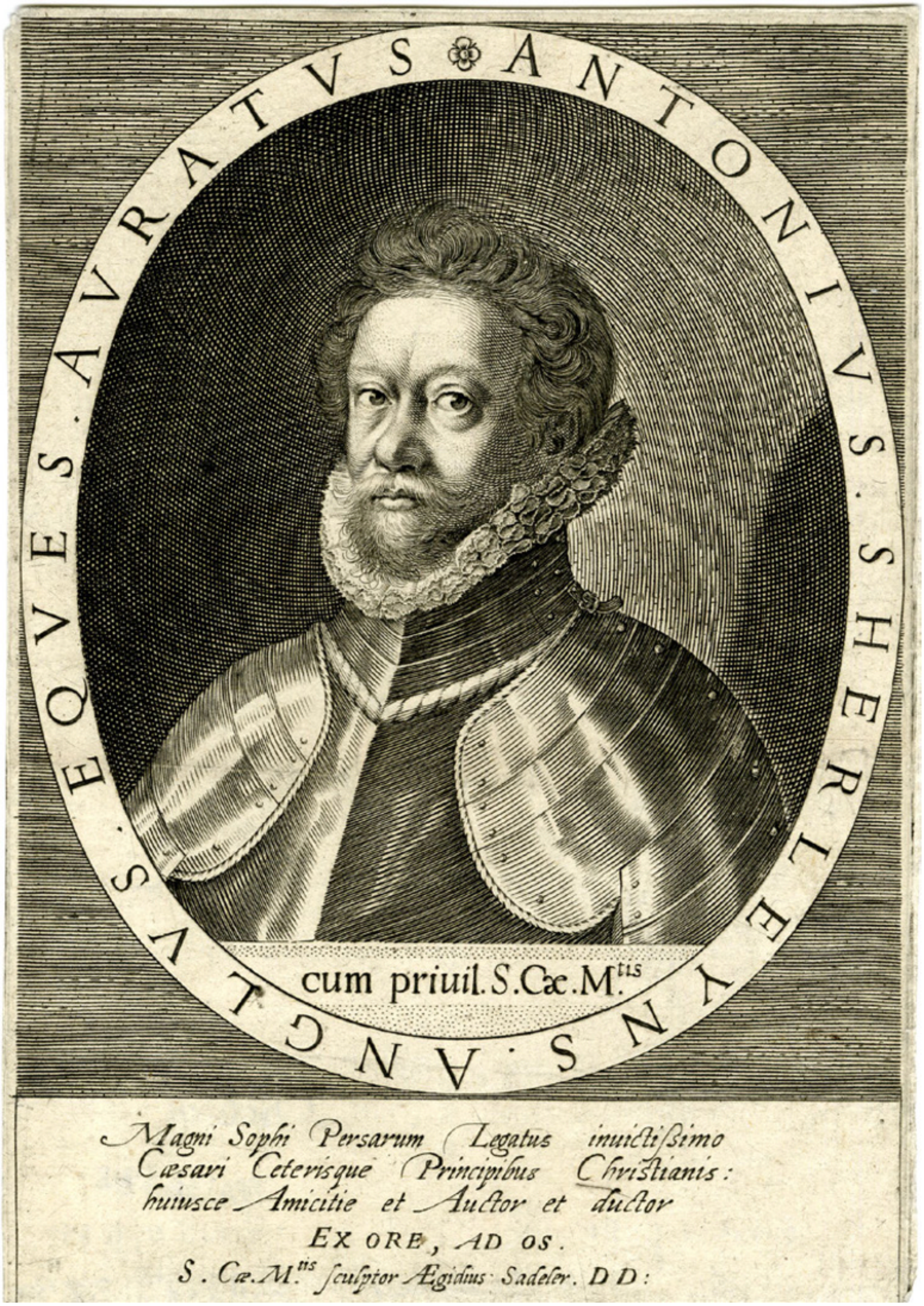
ANTONIVS . SHERLEYVS . ANGLVS . EQVES . AVRATVS
cum priuil. S.Cæ.Mtis
Magni Sophi Persarum Legatus inuictiſsimo
Cæsari Ceterisque Principibus Christianis:
huiusce Amicitie et Auctor et ductor
EX ORE, AD OS.
S. Cæ.Mtis ſculptor Ægidius Sadeler. DD:

Figure 36.6 Aegidius Sadeler II, "Portrait of Anthony Sherley," Prague, 1601; engraving. Source: British Museum, London P,1.169.

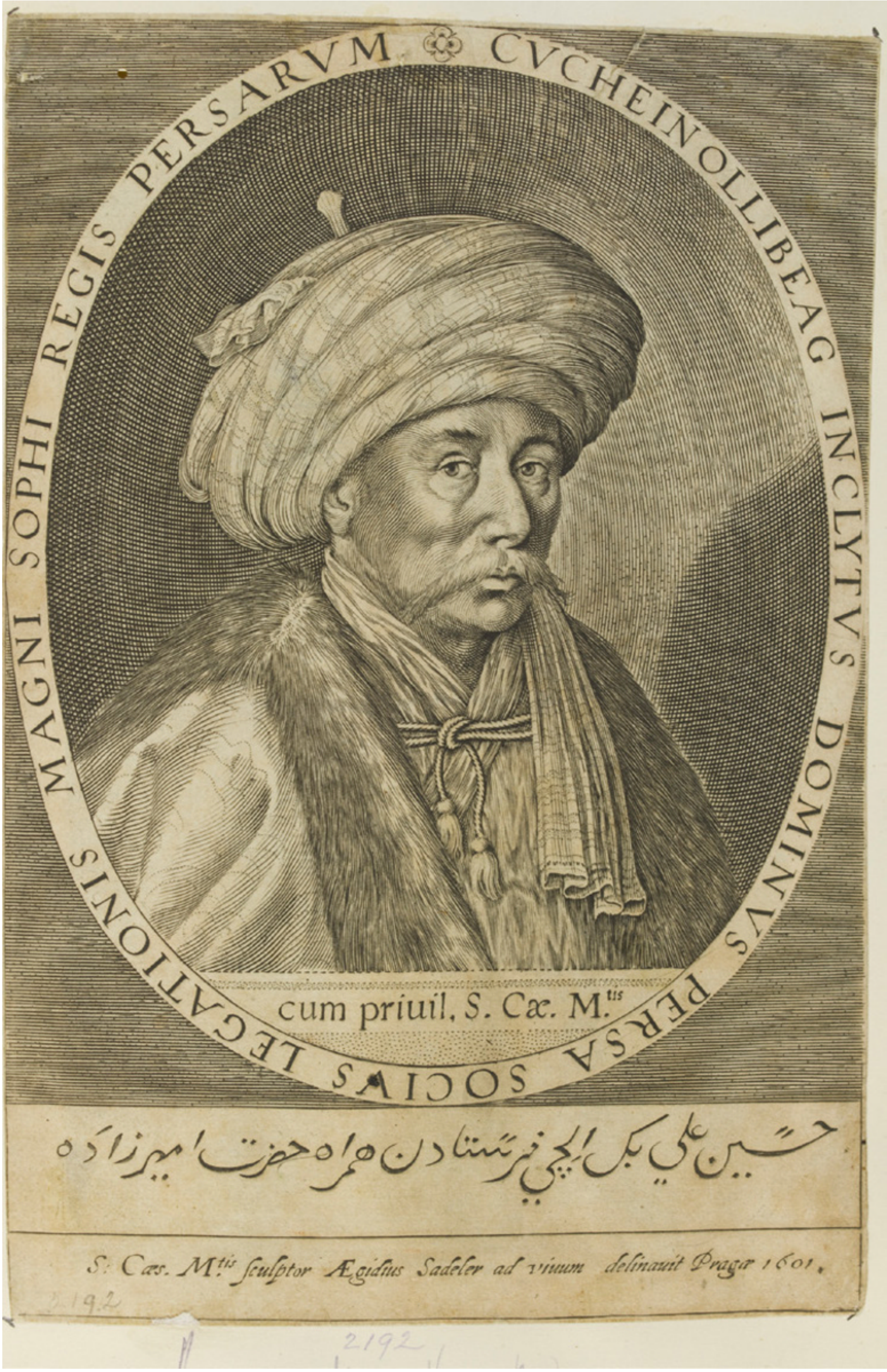
MAGNI SOPHI REGIS PERSARVM ✿ CVCHEINOLLIBEAG INCLYTVS DOMINVS PERSA SOCIVS LEGATIONIS
cum priuil. S. Cæ. Mtis
حسین علی بک ایلچی فرستادن همراه حضرت امیرزاده
S: Cæs. Mtis sculptor Ægidius Sadeler ad viuum delinauit Pragæ 1601.
2192

Figure 36.7 Aegidius Sadeler II, "Portrait of Husayn 'Ali Beg," Prague, 1601; engraving. Source: Victoria and Albert Museum, London Dyce 2129. (Note: The V&A online database misidentifies the portrait as that of Mechti Kuli Beg, although the Persian inscription clearly gives the name of Husayn 'Ali Beg.)

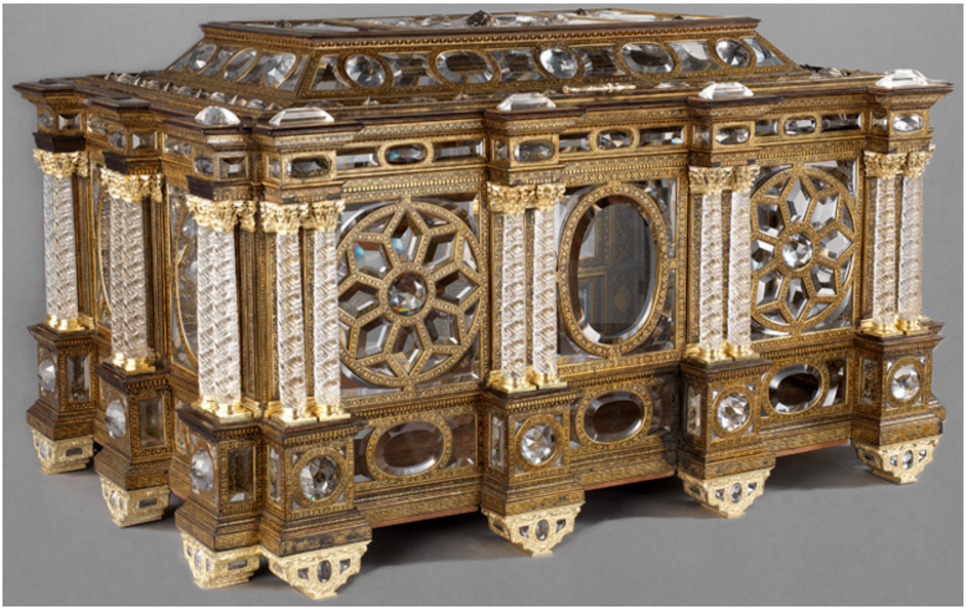

FIGURE 36.8 Casket, Italy (Venice), end of sixteenth century; rock crystal, lacquered wood, gilt silver and bronze. Source: Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Inv. 576 Our; courtesy of Direção-Geral do Património Cultural/Divisão Arquivo Documentaçã Fotográfica. Reproduced with permission.

from there was sent as a gift to Alejo de Meneses, then serving simultaneously as governor of the Estado da India and Augustinian archbishop in Goa, who in turn sent it back to a convent in Lisbon. In an accompanying letter, Meneses mentions that "Shah ʿAbbas highly appreciated the chest," a confusing comment since it seems that the gift never was presented to the Safavid king, as Philip III had ordered. Today this object, now recognized as being of Venetian workmanship, is one of the treasures of the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon (inv. no. 576) and one of the few (indeed, perhaps the only) surviving works of art identifiable as a putative gift from Habsburg Iberia to Safavid Iran (Couto and Loureiro 2008: 221–222; Levenson 2009: 88–89) (Figure 36.8). Interestingly, this particular gift item – or one very similar to it since other examples of the type are known (Carboni 2006: 104–105 and cat. 145) – would become a kind of recurring theme in the accounts of Habsburg–Safavid gift giving, as documentation related to two other embassies shall reveal.

Philip's 1603 letter followed closely upon the onset of a series of European embassies to Iran that, over the next 10 years or so, was to provide opportunities to improve the seemingly imbalanced gift-giving record. A principal figure in these engagements was the Augustinian friar António de Gouvea who, however, later would cause problems in Safavid–Habsburg relations (Alonso 2000; Matthee 2003). His initial Iranian experience occurred in 1602, as part of an informal, fact-finding mission dispatched from Goa by order of Philip III and with a letter from the Iberian monarch to ʿAbbas I. Gouvea also brought gifts in the king's name that he presented to the shah in Mashhad. According to a 1606 history of the Augustinian order in Goa, these gifts included Chinese porcelain and other unspecified *curiosidades*, some of which were gold or gilded. He also presented Christian objects chosen by archbishop Alejo de Meneses, comprising *retablos* and *imagens*, which may have been painted or sculpted diptychs or triptychs, plus a copy of the life of Jesus Christ, richly bound and illustrated with small pictures (Alonso 2000: 37–39; Simpson 2005: 145). The book may have been a Persian version of the Gospels, including stories in the life of Christ and the apostles, variously called the *Mirʾat al-Quds* (Mirror of Holiness) or the *Dastan-i Masih* (Life of Christ), originally written in Portuguese by a Jesuit priest in India, translated into Persian with the help of a Mughal court historian, and presented to the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1602 (Carvalho 2012).[7]

In 1604 yet another embassy from Philip III arrived in Iran via Goa. Subsequent reports about the effectiveness of this mission, and especially the accompanying gifts, seem to be mixed (Gil Fernández 2006: 288–295). In one source, Philip III himself is said to have remonstrated with the Goan viceroy for selecting presents of insufficient value; in another, ʿAbbas is said to have received unspecified gifts with great satisfaction. At a final audience with ʿAbbas in March 1605, the Habsburg delegation offered a gold and enameled chair. This sparked an exchange in which the shah asked if the chair came from Venice; the envoys responded that it was Portuguese work and that it had been sent especially so that his artisans could appreciate the beauty of its execution (Loureiro and Resende 2011: 258). In fact, the chair probably originated in Goa rather than in Portugal. What is of greater note here, assuming this particular exchange even occurred, is ʿAbbas's inquiry about the chair's origin and especially his apparent familiarity with Italian works, and the envoys' presumption that "Portuguese" workmanship would provide a model for Safavid emulation.

The same attitude of "noblesse oblige" would emerge again several years later during another Habsburg mission, headed again by António de Gouvea, who meanwhile had been appointed head of the permanent Augustinian mission in Isfahan (Gil Fernández 2009: 174–182). The prelate arrived there from Goa in late June 1608 with royal gifts comprising

> a dinner service of various pieces in gilt metal including some bottles, all worked in China in relief and with a great deal of detail; some Chinese and Japanese screens that were the first such paintings to enter Iran and were particularly appreciated by 'Abbas, who was a great amateur of paintings; a very elaborate silver writing table with its drawers filled with amber and other gold jewels garnished with emeralds and small rubies; a cup embellished with precious stones, and many other smaller pieces, some Spanish and others Chinese, which were more impressive in appearance than

> in value, but esteemed there [i.e., in Iran] because they were unknown. All were pleasing to ʿAbbas who held several pieces in his hands and lamented that no artisans in his lands knew how to make such things. (Alonso 2000: 89; Loureiro and Resende 2011: 260)

Compared with previous gifts from Habsburg Europe to ʿAbbas, these offerings were much more distinctive in terms of form, media, and origin. Of particular note are the number of items reported to have come from the Far East. It is possible that these works passed from China or Japan through Macao and from there to Goa, while the writing table may have been fabricated from silver mined in New Spain. And given ʿAbbas's known interest in and patronage of painting, it is indeed possible that he would have admired the screens, although they may not have been the novelties that Gouvea supposed. It is highly unlikely, however, that the shah expressed regret at the inability of Persian craftsman to create "impressive" works, since quantities of luxury objects were produced during the Safavid period (Canby 2009; Thompson and Canby 2003). Indeed, Gouvea's final comments would seem to reflect a European sense of superiority over Iran, combined with his smug satisfaction at having passed off gifts that appeared to be more valuable than they really were.[8]

A few months prior to Gouvea's arrival in Isfahan, the shah had dispatched another embassy abroad, with Robert Sherley designated as his official ambassador (Gil Fernández 2009: 121–169). After stops at various European courts, Sherley and his entourage arrived in Madrid in late January 1610, with presents from ʿAbbas for Philip III. The Safavid royal presents are recorded in the 1638 edition of Richard Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes* and included "four hunters horns, very smooth and richly garnished; twelve most gallant plumes of feathers of diverse colors; a Persian writing table, garnished with fair precious stones; and six drinking glasses that could not be broken." (This description suggests that the vessels were made of metal rather than glass.) Knolles also lists some even more substantial sounding items, which today are almost impossible to match with known objects of the period:

> couch beds so cunningly made as that they were like unto chairs, having wrought in them the ancient wars bet[ween] Ascenius and Chiusa the king of the Medes;[9] images of Ismael, Juchel and Jonas, together with his [that is, the shah's] own, cast in gold and set with most precious stones and pearls; and two pieces of Arras adorned with most precious stones and pearls wherein the worthy acts of him that great Tamerlane were lively to be seen. (Knolles 1638: 1273; Simpson 2005: 146)

It is not entirely clear from the description if the "Arras" (presumably a tapestry) featured a representation of Timur or of ʿAbbas as Timur. Notwithstanding this particular (and by no means the only) iconographic ambiguity, Knolles's itemization reveals the variety of media and imagery among the Safavid gifts, some of them highly unusual in terms of Persian artistic production, such as the cast gold portrait of ʻAbbas, which does, however, resonate with the longstanding practice of gifting portraits, as, for instance, the ones that Husayn ʿAli Beg and Anthony Sherley received in Italy in 1601. Although Knolles does not make any mention of the reaction of Philip III to the presents from ʿAbbas I, we may assume that the Safavid collection was designed to highlight the shah's material resources, ancient heritage, and distinguished lineage.

In late 1609 ʿAbbas sent forth yet another dual embassy to Europe, jointly headed by the aforementioned Denghiz Beg Rumlu and António de Gouvea (Gil Fernández 2009: 171–222). Arriving in Prague in the spring or summer of 1610, the pair presented the Austrian Habsburg emperor Rudolph II with an even more varied set of gifts than those given to the Spanish Habsburg ruler Philip III by Robert Sherley earlier that same year. The items, comprising primarily large gems or bejeweled objects, are both listed in an extensive inventory of Rudolph's Kunstkammer (cabinet of curiosities) from 1607 to 1611 and elaborated upon by Knolles in his 1638 publication (quoted here):

> two damasked knives, with jasper hafts and sheaths covered with diamonds; two topazes, one white and the other violet, the last big enough to be made into a cup;[10] an amethyst as big as an egg; a large rough diamond; a white stone the color of water that was a preservative against the plague, and a Persian bow inlaid with the veins of a camel.

The description of the latter item may have been a touch fanciful, but it is followed by a still more improbable piece: "a serpent's horn, much esteemed for its rare virtues." In addition, Knolles lists an obvious "recycled" gift: "a topaz of exceeding greatness, given to the king of Persia by an Indian king."[11]

The first item in the Kunstkammer inventory is also the most unexpected: "a gold cross with rubies and diamonds in the midst of [surrounding?] an agate, said to have come from the temple of Solomon" (Bauer and Haupt 1976: 30, no. 504). Knolles gives it his most fulsome description, taking particular note of "the figure of the Virgin Mary and Child, holding her young babe in her arms, which was so artfully graven as it might be thought to be a work of nature" (Knolles 1638: 1297). The origin of this piece is intriguing. ʿAbbas is known to have received a crucifix with reliquary compartments from a delegation of Discalced Carmelite fathers in Isfahan in early 1608. Although the description of that cross does not correspond to the one that ʿAbbas sent to Rudolph II, it is possible that the gold cross with what sounds like a carved gem was another Christian icon that came from Europe to the Safavid court at some point and that the shah decided to send back again – so another recycled or redistributed gift. Another possibility is that the cross was acquired or made in Iran, perhaps within the Armenian community of Isfahan, for the specific purpose of Safavid royal gift giving in Europe (Simpson 2005: 143–146). The inventory reference to the cross as coming from the temple of Solomon may very well have been a bit of hyperbole introduced by António de Gouvea at the time of the Safavid gift presentation to Rudolph II.

Denghiz Beg Rumlu and Gouvea eventually reached the Iberian peninsula in the summer of 1610, and during the next year divided their time between Madrid and Lisbon (Alonso 2000: 102–130). During that period, the Augustinian occupied himself with urging Habsburg officials to begin preparations for a gift worthy of being taken back to Iran. His stay in Lisbon happened to coincide with that of an Armenian agent named Hoggia (or Khoja) Sefer, whom ʿAbbas had sent to Italy to make various purchases, notably armaments, and who then had been obliged to pawn them in Milan. Evidently sensing an opportunity for one royal to do a favor for another, Gouvea suggested that Philip III pay to "liberate" these hocked items and to include them in the Habsburg present being assembled for ʿAbbas "since the [purchased] objects were greatly appreciated in Persia and it would mean a lot to free them from their confiscation" (Alonso 2000: 125–126). This suggestion seems to have struck a positive chord at the Habsburg court, although it actually would not be realized for several years. Meanwhile, Denghiz Beg Rumlu gave the royal secretary a list of Safavid desiderata. The Persian's request, plus Gouvea's encouragement, may lie behind a letter written just before Christmas 1611 in the name of Philip III, ordering the Habsburg viceroy in Goa to assemble certain items to form part of the gift for ʿAbbas. These were to include a velvet bed hanging embroidered in China. If such a textile was not available in Goa, so the royal missive continued, then some silk or taffeta embroidered with birds and flowers would be equally appropriate. In addition, the gift collection should contain some Indian clothes and Indian spices, as well as elephant teeth (presumably meaning tusks) to make bows. This detailed directive was later followed by another sent by the president of the council of Portugal in Madrid, telling the viceroy to buy what had been specified in the previous letter but to double the quantity of items in order to make a reasonably rich present for ʿAbbas (Alonso 2000: 157–160).

From correspondence dating from mid-January 1612, we know that Gouvea emphasized how crucial it was for Philip III to send presents that would be well received by ʿAbbas. He also stressed that the previously purchased weapons and armor, to be sprung from their Milanese impoundment and designated as the principal part of the Habsburg gift, had to arrive in Lisbon in time to be included with other presents to be procured (Alonso 1980: 102–103). As noted above, this goal was not met and the Italian pieces ended up being sent with a subsequent Habsburg embassy. Meanwhile, a memorandum by the court secretary Nicolás Crivelli specifies that the items to be procured for the Gouvea mission were to include "shining glass pendants (*brincos de vidrio*)[12] that are in the palace garden arcade, a large stone with embedded emeralds, which because it is a thing unknown in Persia will be valued; four pairs of dogs … and four strong hunting dogs" (Gil Fernández 2009: 476).

Two other documents provide an even more extensive listing of proposed gift items with some indication of their origins, such as a fine tapestry from Flanders, textiles from London and Segovia, two chains with enameled links made in Madrid, and Chinese and Indian textiles to be bought in India (Gil Fernández 2009: 474–475).

These same two documents also cite a crystal chest that the "ambassador had pawned in Milan … for 5,000 or 6,000 crucados, because it is understood to be greatly admired" (Gil Fernández 2009: 474). The piece, clearly one of the items left behind in Italy by 'Abbas's agent Hoggia Sefer and part of the "liberated" lot of Persian purchases that did not reach Lisbon in time for Gouvea's sailing, reappears in an itemization of gifts that went to Iran with a subsequent Habsburg embassy. This later register gives further details about the piece, namely that it was "a large and richly worked crystal chest, with gold columns, that the king of Persia sent to have decorated in Italy. The work was so badly done, however, that after it was finished, the chest was pawned for 5,000 or 6,000 ducats" (Gil Fernández 2009: 314–315). As described in these early 1610s documents, the piece sounds remarkably similar to the crystal chest designated as a gift for ʿAbbas by Philip III in his March 1603 letter to the Portuguese viceroy of the Indies, as discussed above. It is possible, of course, that the archival documentation here has become confused or conflated. Be that as it may, that the same, or at the very least a very similar, work of art figures in three different reports of gifts from Philip III to ʿAbbas reinforces our understanding of the type of luxury object that was deemed suitable for a Habsburg monarch to send to his Safavid counterpart, with the expectation that such a gift would be well received.

Returning again to the preparation of the gifts for Gouvea's return mission to Iran, a message from the viceroy in Goa to Philip III's secretary reveals that 20 000 ducats would be spent for the purchase of these gifts; in turn the Council of State in Madrid replied that this sum was not enough and that 60 000 should be allocated (Gil Fernández 2009: 477–478). Various Council members worried that time was running short to assemble the gift, since the ship on which Gouvea and Denghiz Beg Rumlu were to sail was scheduled to leave in a month, that ʿAbbas would be waiting for presents, and that there would be grave consequences if nothing arrived. They recommended quickly assembling the swords, gold horse trappings and arms from Milan, together with a good gold wall hanging. These high-level discussions also involved considerable debate about sending arms to a Muslim country, since such export was strictly forbidden.[13]

The Crivelli memorandum cited above also lists the presents to be given to Denghiz Beg Rumlu, including a coat of mail and sword that the Safavid ambassador himself had especially requested from Philip III. Evidently, the mail coat was to be custom made, since the document specifies that it needed to fit a fat man. The envoy was also to receive a gold chain, a gold sword, a portrait of Philip III encrusted with stones (preferably emeralds), and some horse trappings that Denghiz Beg Rumlu had admired (Alonso 1980: 104; Gil Fernández 2009: 476).

That the entire gift assemblage, particularly the pieces destined for 'Abbas, were of personal concern to Philip III himself is evidenced by a royal letter written to a member of the Habsburg Council of State in which the king asked about the gifts' status and worried, with reason as it happened, about the delay in the arrival of the arms coming from Milan that he had paid to release. As previously noted, these arms and other items, such as the Italian crystal chest, never did arrive in time, and Philip's concern was certainly justified by what happened when Gouvea and Denghiz Beg Rumlu returned to Iran in 1613. Besides castigating Gouvea for the mishandling of his silk, ʿAbbas questioned the Augustinian regarding its value in comparison with the Habsburg offerings. Gouvea replied that what he had brought from Philip III included pieces of gold and "other curious things with stones of great value," and that the value of ʿAbbas's 50 bales of silk was equal to that of the Indian spices (Alonso 2000: 170–172). Some substantiation for this claim is found in a Portuguese document dated 7 June 1612 and comparable to a purchase order that itemizes a half-dozen or so silver and gold-plated or gilded objects decorated in relief, including tableware (a plate, ewer, salt cellar, salver, and so on),[14] as well as three aigrettes set with precious stones and colored enamel, two large gold and jeweled chains, and six partially gilded bottles inside a velvet-lined carrier with silver mounts. In addition to specifying the exact cost or evaluation for every item, the ledger also records the precise weight of the silver and gold pieces and the type and number of gems use in the aigrettes and chains. By far the most expensive gift was a gold-link necklace adorned with 140 diamonds that cost 480 000 reals. The first item of gilded silver – a large plate – cost over 348 593 reals and weighed 34 pounds, 7-3/8 ounces (Couto and Loureiro 2008: 220–221; Oliveira Andrade 1969: 10–12).

We are never likely to be able to confirm that Gouvea actually presented ʿAbbas with all the individual pieces in this detailed purchase order. We may imagine, however, that the shah was less than mollified by what the Habsburg envoy had brought and by what he claimed as the gifts' worth, and so did retort that what Philip had sent was not worth half the amount of his bales of silk that had been given away, rather than being sold, in Spain. In short, whereas on previous occasions 'Abbas was reported to have admired the gifts presented on behalf of Philip III, this time the shah was definitely unimpressed and even offended.

Meanwhile, Gouvea quickly sent word about ʿAbbas's dismissive reaction back to the Habsburg court, a report that may have influenced Philip III's decision to immediately appoint another ambassador, the Castilian nobleman Don Garcia de Silva y Figuera, and to equip this embassy with more numerous and substantial presents for ʿAbbas (Floor and Herzig 2012: 161–180; Gil Fernández 2009: 241–358; Loureiro and Resende 2011). A great deal is now known about this mission and its associated gifts, based on diverse sources.[15] Suffice it to say here that the choice of presents was deliberated at the highest court levels, with Philip directly involved in specific selections. After months of discussion and preparation, three separate gift groupings, totaling between 400 and 600 articles, had been assembled. The first group comprised the pawned items, including the crystal chest with gold columns, redeemed by Philip III, as discussed above. The next consisted of gifts from Philip himself valued at 32 100 ducats and featuring a variety of gilded silver vessels and impressive silver furniture, as well as unique pieces such as the sword he wore at his wedding, a large Spanish mastiff named Roldan, and five barrels of cochineal, a valuable red colorant of Mexican origin. The third group of gifts was gathered at ambassador Garcia's own expense; while more numerous, the type of precious metal objects seem to have been comparable to Philip's, with the noteworthy addition of two portraits of women clothed in Spanish style, one described as the Spanish infanta and French queen and thus identifiable as Anne of Austria.

The eventual presentation of these gifts to ʿAbbas in July 1614, after an arduous four-year journey, was a grand and memorable affair, as Don Garcia subsequently recounted in his travelogue. As for the Safavid reaction to the Habsburg offerings, Don Garcia only mentions, apropos the crystal chest, that the shah "was honored by this gesture from the king of Spain and delighted by the gift because he regarded it as a rare and valuable thing" (Gil Fernández 2009: 314–315).

Given the absence of a comprehensive study of Iranian–European gift giving in the early modern period, what preliminary conclusions may be drawn from the selective (and at times overlapping and entangled) interactions considered here? First and foremost, there seems to have been a remarkable similarity and consistency in the type and scope of gifts offered by representatives from Europe to Iran and from Iran to Europe or bestowed upon visiting envoys during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The records for both sides of these exchanges repeatedly cite gemstones, jewelry and bejeweled objects, arms and armor, cloth and clothing, vessels and furnishings in precious metal, horse trappings, animals, and royal portraits. Occasionally the formulaic listings are punctuated by special or unusual items, such as the Christian cross and the serpent's horn included among the gifts from ʿAbbas I to Rudolph II presented in 1610, or the five barrels of cochineal from New Spain among the gifts from Philip III to 'Abbas in 1614.

Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, this range of gifts – including religious icons and exotica – corresponds very closely to the items exchanged among European royal family members, especially at Iberian and Austrian courts, and given by Christian princes of rank to their subordinates, during the same period (Pérez de Tudela and Gschwend 2001). While gifting among European royals was compelled in large part by intimate bonds of kinship, such rituals derived equally from an overall sense of obligation and expectation that also motivated gift giving between European and Iranian courts and courtiers. Another point of East/West comparison is that gifts were invariably assessed in terms either of the overall cost of their procurement or the monetary value or weight of individual items (e.g., Pérez de Tudela and Gschwend 2001: 95–98). Furthermore, the logistical and operational challenges in obtaining, transporting, and delivering gifts – whether across the same continent or across the sea – were equally daunting. If today we are struck by the arrangements required to send gifts from Lisbon to Vienna (Pérez de Tudela and Gschwend 2001:1), the accounts of what it took to get presents from Isfahan to Madrid appear all the more astounding.

In short, the gift-giving episodes described here formed part of a truly global tradition recognized as fundamental to multiple levels of royal interaction at home and abroad. The global nature of gift-giving practice was matched by the widespread origin of the items that were regularly included in diplomatic gift assemblages, including objects from the Far East and the New World, as well as by the diversity of their materials, forms, and functions.

In terms of early modern history and chronology, there was clearly a progression in the frequency and number of gifts given and received between Iran and Europe. Furthermore, the increased diplomatic effort and monarchical attention devoted to the selection of presents suggests a growing recognition of the urgent necessity of gifting rituals, including the proper presentation of gifts, within international negotiations. Notwithstanding all the planning and implementation involved in this ritualized practice, there is no indication that it yielded any genuine strategic results. Indeed, the historical record shows that none of the gift-bearing envoys was able to facilitate, much less to secure, the sought-after political or commercial alliances. That does not mean, of course, that the gift items themselves had no impact. Recent research has confirmed the influence that Safavid textiles had on contemporary European fabric and fashions and even architectural interiors. Thus, for instance, the type of wide sash made of gold fabric that ʿAbbas gave to members of Anthony Sherley's entourage became extremely popular in northern Europe, while the bird and flower designs featured on Persian luxury textiles, of which many samples went with Safavid envoys to Iberia, served as models for the painted decoration of ceramic title panels in Portuguese churches during the second half of the seventeenth century[16] (Figure 36.9). And even if the Safavid courtly dress did not transform European sartorial style, it was greatly admired, as is attested by the well-known portraits of Robert Sherley wearing the marvelous figural robe of honor given to him by ʿAbbas (Langer 2013: figs. 40–43), as well as those of the Persian envoys Zeynal Khan Shamlu and Mehdi Quli Beg, also wearing comparably luxurious garments, painted at the court of Rudolph II. By the same token it is tempting to speculate that the various portraits of European grandees given as farewell gifts to ʿAbbas's ambassadors, as well as the painting of a European queen brought to ʿAbbas by Don Gracia de Silva, may have aroused particular interest at the Safavid court at precisely the moment when single-figure studies had become an important component of the Safavid artistic repertoire, and even may have influenced the emerging vogue in Iran for a Europeanizing painting style (*farangi-sazi*) and for large-scale oil paintings on canvas.[17] Thus, even if the exchange of embassies was diplomatically inconclusive and the presentation of presents little more than an obligatory or symbolic gesture, the actual items, including objects that today would be considered valuable works of art, that went from east to west and west to east did at least serve to familiarize distinct cultures with one another's material riches and artistic assets and perhaps even to enhance recognition – if not actual appreciation – of their shared courtly traditions and rituals.

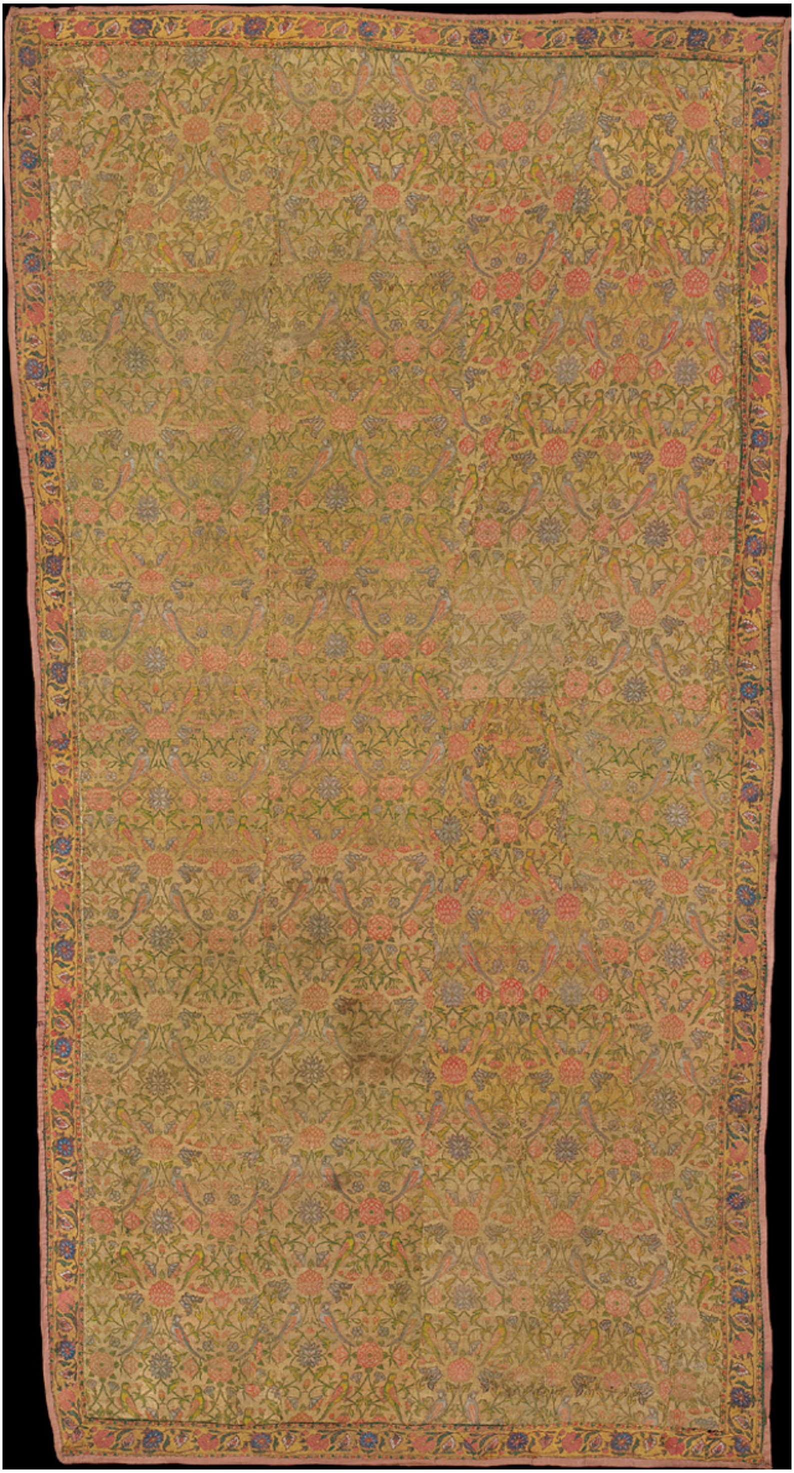

Figure 36.9 Panel with birds and flowering vines, Iran, first half of seventeenth century; compound plain weave, silk and metal-wrapped thread. Source: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift of Philip Lehman in memory of his wife Carrie L. Lehman, 1938 38.1055. Reproduced with permission.

Notes

1 Couto and Loueiro 2008; Floor and Herzig 2012; Gil Fernández 2006–2009; Newman 2009; Matthee and Flores 2011; Rota 2009. For a complete bibliography through 2007, see Floor and Hakimzadeh 2007.

2 Floor and Herzig 2012: 357–363; Matthee 1998; Matthee 2001; Matthee 2004: 37–41.

3 ʿAbbas's father and immediate predecessor Shah Muhammad Khodabanda (r. 1578–1587) did send two missions to Iberia, but relatively little is known about any accompanying gifts. Flannery 2013: 47–49; Floor and Herzig 2012: 189.

4 For farewell gifts given to the group by the Grand Duke of Moscovy, see Le Strange 1926: 257.

5 See Kurz 1977: chap. XIV, 4 for a brief discussion and reference to gifts presented by Zeynal Khan Shamlu, which apparently included figural and gold brocades, silks, and a silk carpet.

6 This source cites an unpublished, archival document. Uruch Beg makes Rudolph's parting gift for Husayn 'Ali Beg sound much grander. Le Strange 1926: 277.

7 See Loureiro and Resende 2011: 254–255 for other possible identifications of this manuscript.

8 See Matthee and Flores 2011: 249–264 for a succinct analysis of Gouvea's travelogue, known as the *Relaçam*, although without specific mention of the envoy's audience with 'Abbas in 1608. Given that the *Relaçam* was aimed at an Iberian audience, its hints of "national" pride are hardly surprising.

9 Certainly the description of this "bed" (perhaps a *takht*) differs from the bejeweled and gilded throne lined with floral silk that ʿAbbas sent to the Russian tsar Boris Godunov in 1604. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery 2009: fig. 9.

10 The Habsburg inventory lists three pieces of topaz, according to their color and size. Bauer and Haupt 1976: 30, nos. 507–509.

11 Bauer and Haupt 1976: 30, nos. 504–510, 33, no. 590, 72, no. 170; Karl 2012: 120; Knolles 1638: 1297. Several items (the large diamond, white stone, bow, and serpent's horn) cited by Knolles are missing from the Habsburg inventory, as is the great topaz, although there is mention of a *topazi geschirr*, indicating perhaps a topaz table or vase. Karl associates all these gifts with a Persian embassy in 1609 (presumably that of Robert Sherley who did stop in Prague), although Bauer and Haupt specify 1610. My appreciation to Barbara Karl for her kind assistance with these inventories.

12 These may have been Venetian production. See Carboni 2006: 104.

13 See Alonso 1980: 109–115 regarding the various recommendations made during these gift preparations.

14 One large plate is described as "laurado de bastiães," again suggesting animal relief decoration, and a large salt cellar as being made from antique pieces. Couto and Loureiro 2008: 220.

15 This gift-giving episode has been discussed independently by Simpson in Komaroff 2011: 125–138, and Pinto in Loueiro and Resende 2011: 245–278. See also Simpson 2015.

16 Peck 2013: 75, 80 and cat. nos. 93A-B, 101A-C; Thompson *et al.* 2010: 92–93, 117–118, 176–185.

17 Canby 2009: cat. nos. 10, 13, 52–53 92–93; Langer 2013: 61, 238–268.

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37

Carpets, Textiles, and Trade in the Early Modern Islamic World

Walter B. Denny

This discussion of carpets and textiles in the Islamic world after 1450 falls in four major areas: first, the symbolism and economics of status, taste, and conspicuous consumption; second, a brief overview of scholarship; third, the realm of wealth, commerce, trade, and taxation; and fourth, artistic creativity, technique, and style. It ends with a consideration of regional differences with a particular focus on the Ottoman (*c.* 1299–1923), Safavid (1501–1736), and Mughal (1526–1857) empires.

Knotted-pile carpets, an emblematic Islamic art form, were made and used at all levels of society throughout much of the Islamic world, and employ a fundamentally simple technique practiced in villages and nomadic encampments as well as in commercial and court ateliers. By contrast, the technique of weaving silk luxury fabrics can be enormously complex. These were made on draw-looms, easily the most complex machinery to exist in world civilization before the industrial age. Such machines were operated by a weaver, who manipulated the shuttles containing the colored silks that formed the weft surface of the fabric, and a draw-boy, who manipulated the warps on the loom to create patterns and textures from a combination of warps and wefts. Draw-looms could in effect be programmed preparatory to actual weaving in such a fashion that warp and weft threads of many different colors could be woven together and manipulated in ways that resulted in the outer surface of a finished fabric containing elaborate designs and patterns, and often several distinct textures as well. Requiring a high level of technology for all processes, woven silks from the Islamic world were produced

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over centuries in a wide variety of complicated techniques that show an extraordinary command of the weaving medium. The high price of the raw materials – silk thread and dyestuffs – aside, it is the complexity of the artistry involved that contributed more than anything else both to the high status and the high price of complex silk fabrics destined to be made into *khil'at* – ceremonial court vestments that conveyed the high status of the wearer (Atasoy *et al.* 2002: 21–35; *Encyclopedia of Islam*: Hilat).

Symbolism, Status, Economics, and Taste

In early modern times, consciousness of textiles – their materials, techniques, designs, origins, symbolic associations, and price – was much more widespread in society than it is today. Silk fabrics had a special place in the spectrum of conspicuous consumption, and draw-loom-woven or embroidered patterned or plain silk textiles used as costumes and furnishings occupied the highest pinnacle of status. But linen, wool, mohair, and cotton fabrics both plain and fancy also had their own symbolic niches in the Islamic visual world, as well as their positions in the early modern economy. A symbolism of materials, colors, designs, and costume cuts, along with distinctive headgear, abetted and reinforced by sumptuary conventions and regulations, meant that textiles and costumes conveyed far more complex and widely understood artistic meanings than most other media, projecting group identity, status, and wealth in the public arena. Textiles worn as clothing signified one's gender, religion, national origin, profession, caste, and wealth, and often as well one's purported taste and morals.

The well-known hadith of the Prophet – "those who wear silk in this world will not wear it in the next" – meant among other things that the periodic waves of puritanism that historically have swept over the Islamic world were hostile to the creation, use, and preservation of silk artifacts (*Encyclopedia of Islam*: Harir). Like wine, silk fabrics are frequently mentioned in the Qur'an as a reward to be gained in the afterlife as a result of their being shunned on earth. The frequent allusions to silk and its associations with paradise in the Qur'an, no doubt contributed to its high status and allure in the Islamic cultures; forbidden fruit always tastes the best.

Textiles were likewise among the most important in terms of their economic impact as major items of commerce and major sources of taxation both as raw materials and for finished goods. The economic importance of the production of textiles involved both the manufacture and sale of their composite physical parts – fibers, dyestuffs, mordants – and the economic role of the groups participating in the complex and many layered process of creation: among others, shepherds and shearers, cotton and linen growers and processers, cocoon-harvesters; winders, carders, spinners and twisters, and dyers; designers, weavers, embroiderers, finishers, and tailors. No other art form save architecture was subjected to such extensive public display; no other art form was so governed by everyday conventions of style and taste, nor attracted as much state legislation, nor brought to government as much tax revenue (*Encylopedia of Islam*: Harir). Textiles were also highly susceptible to subtle and not-so-subtle lowering of quality as a response to the profit motive.

Within the broader spectrum of textiles in the Islamic world, knotted-pile carpets occupied a special place, becoming an integral part of European material culture from the early fifteenth century onward. Documentation of all kinds attests to the importance of carpets within the Islamic world as symbols of status, but also as indispensable furnishings for houses of prayer. In Europe, where carpets were more expensive and difficult to obtain, they appear to have held even higher value both economically and in terms of status, as the depiction of Islamic carpets in countless European paintings, and the documentation of east–west carpet trade, amply attest (King and Sylvester 1983: 9–23).

Scholarship

Although documentation of textiles from the early centuries of Islam is somewhat weak, the historical record after 1450 is considerably richer, with far more surviving examples. Even so, we have only a very few extant examples of fourteenth- to fifteenth-century Timurid, Turkmen, and Mamluk fabrics; pictorial evidence of Timurid fabrics found in manuscript painting suggests, as do a few surviving examples, that court costume was largely monochrome silk, probably *atlas*, the shiny warp-faced fabric we call satin, decorated by embroidery, employing court-related designs often inspired by Chinese prototypes. Possible evidence for Turkmen or Timurid court costume found in designs for embroidered collars preserved in albums in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library suggests the importance of Timurid court practice in Herat to the east, again with a predilection for Chinese motifs and styles (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 159–238). Surviving Mamluk woven silks, mostly incorporating small-scale designs and layouts with strong affinities to contemporary Chinese silks, especially those in damask technique, are also extremely rare. Despite this, there is compelling evidence that they exerted a major stylistic influence on Italian silk weaving in Lucca and other centers (Mack 2002: 38–41; Mackie 1984: 140). The fabrics produced by the Nasrids (1232–1492), the last Muslim dynasty of Spain, on the other hand, have survived in a number of splendid Christian ecclesiastical vestments incorporating complete loom widths. Nasrid textiles of the fifteenth century, with their favored designs of symmetrically arranged beasts and birds, represent a modernization of medieval fabric design, and are far less likely to show the complex symmetries and layouts of Chinese inspiration more common in the Middle East. Another favored layout consisted of stripes, often with inscriptions, a format closely related to the tilework favored in contemporary Nasrid architecture (Figure 37.1).

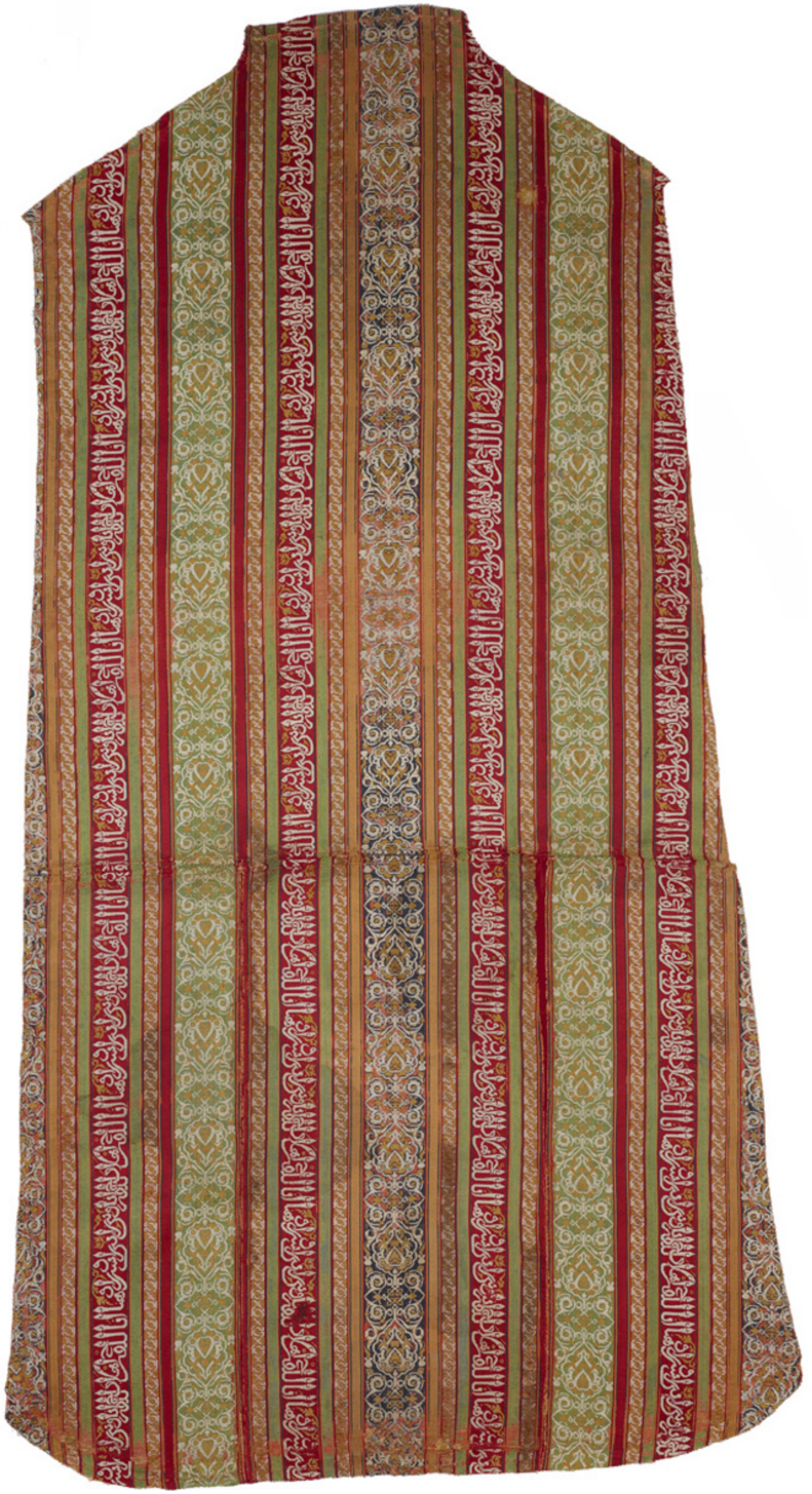

FIGURE 37.1 Silk panel from a chasuble, Nasrid, Spain, Granada, probably fourteenth century. 138.5 × 75 cm. Source: The Textile Museum, Washington, DC, 84.29. Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1936. Reproduced with permission.

One of the most important assets of textile scholarship on material produced after 1450 is the widespread adaptation by carpet and textile designers of the styles generated by court design ateliers, what the late Kurt Erdmann referred to as the "carpet design revolution" (Erdmann 1976: 31–33), a phenomenon that continues to be explored by scholars (Denny 2002: 35–42; Denny 2010; Thompson 2010). This relationship of undated textiles to firmly dated examples of book illustration, illumination, and building decoration, happily allows us to develop a firm chronology of the luxury textiles produced under the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.

The Turkish scholar Tahsin Öz produced two pioneering volumes on Ottoman silks that helped to establish a basic chronology of Ottoman genres, textile terms and techniques and styles (Öz 1950). Feridun Dalsar published an exhaustive compendium of documents concerning silk production in Bursa, the first Ottoman capital (Dalsar 1960). Later exhibition catalogues, and the monumental work *İpek*, authored by a team of scholars led by Nurhan Atasoy, provided a broad overview of the techniques and styles of Ottoman silk production as well as a coherent history of style, commerce, and collections as understood by the end of the twentieth century (Atasoy *et al.* 2002). Turkish documentary material has survived in a much better state than that of Iran and India, because the Ottoman Empire did not endure conquest by a foreign or indigenous power, ruling continuously for over 600 years until 1923.

In addition to silk, the important role of other fibers should not be overlooked. These include mohair, a fabric woven from the hair of the Angora goat; this was also a luxury fabric, often worn by high judicial figures (who carefully avoided silk). Cotton was widely used for inexpensive textiles of many different kinds, and along with linen, as a substrate for embroidery. It was also combined with silk in a fabric known as *kutnu*.

Compared to Ottoman production, in terms both of technique and repertoire of designs, Safavid textile art is vastly more complex. While the Ottomans employed three basic techniques, the Safavids employed well over a dozen; Safavid textile and carpet designers produced many designs with human and animal figures, which rarely appear in Ottoman textiles and carpets. Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, the primary author-editors of the *Survey of Persian Art* (1938–1939), had a special interest in textiles, and their contributions to this monumental study are still fundamental to an understanding both of the basics and of the complexity of Safavid carpets and silk textiles (Pope and Ackerman 1967: vol. 5). Surviving Safavid luxury silks are relatively rare compared to the enormous numbers of extant Ottoman examples, but a few actually bear woven-in "signatures" of designers such as Ghiyath or Shafi ʿAbbasi. A few collection catalogues and one major exhibition devoted to the Safavid and Qajar traditions comprise most of the recent scholarship on Safavid textile art (Bier 1987). Documentary material on Safavid textiles unfortunately sheds relatively little light on place of production, as it is difficult to associate specific documents with specific surviving works.

Mughal textiles, with their relationships to both Indian and Iranian traditions, are likewise relatively rare and their study is hampered by lack of documentary material. Mughal weavers practiced all the major genres – satins, figured lampas fabrics (a technique combining both satin and twill weaving structures, usually with the twill elements forming the design), and pile velvets – and an unusual proficiency in embroidery as well. Mughal carpets are often more pictorial than their counterparts, and frequently are meant to be viewed from one side only, without the double bilateral symmetry predominating in Persian carpets. Recent scholarship of Indian Islamic carpet weaving (most notably a 1997 exhibition, *Flowers Underfoot*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art) is still making important new discoveries, including information about extensive production of carpets in the Deccan region of central India (Kamada 2011; Walker 1997). By the later seventeenth century the Deccan was apparently a major source of rather inexpensive carpets, while the much sought-after carpets of Lahore and northern India, especially those made from *pashm* or cashmere fiber, were both difficult to obtain and extremely expensive. Dutch traders brought Deccani carpets in large quantities to Japan, where today most surviving examples of this production are still found in collections (Kamada 2011). Most recently, the so-called Indo-Isfahan carpets, long suspected to have been woven in India, have been more confidently ascribed to Iran, based on technical considerations such as their use of a four-ply cotton warp.

In part because through export they have long been a part of Western material culture, Islamic carpets and textiles were collected, adapted for use, and studied in Europe. Silk textiles from the Islamic world figured prominently in early general histories of luxury textiles by Otto von Falke (d. 1942), Adele Coulin Weibel (d. 1963), and others, and have long been a part both of secular and ecclesiastical costume in both Orthodox and Roman Catholic countries in Europe. Luminaries such as the art historians Alois Riegl (d. 1905) and Wilhelm von Bode (d. 1929) were the first major scholars of Islamic carpets, and their legacy, which passed from Bode to Ernst Kühnel and then to Kühnel's student Kurt Erdmann, forms the basis of modern carpet studies. The last major general scholarly study of Islamic carpets was published in German by Kurt Erdmann in 1956, and translated into English in 1965; since that time there have been important discoveries in virtually every area of carpet history. Erdmann's influence on subsequent scholarship was great; recent scholarly works of importance have been produced first by May Hamilton Beattie, Charles Grant Ellis, Friedrich Spuhler, and later by Jon Thompson, Daniel Walker, Belkıs Balpınar, Şerare Yetkin, and Walter B. Denny. Important and sometimes startling discoveries of previously unknown early carpets are contributing to an ongoing revision of our fundamental ideas about this important medium (Boralevi 1984, 1986).

Contemporary research indicates that the fifteenth century, once a vast terra incognita outside of Anatolia, should now be understood as a time of shared style in which the center of the carpet-weaving world – Tabriz and its surroundings in northwestern Iran – may have been as important, if not more important, than Egypt, Anatolia, or Khurasan (Denny 2002: 22–29; Thompson 2006: 124–149). The relationship between Spanish and Anatolian carpets, formerly assumed to have been a one-way street with the former copying the latter, is now understood to be far more complex (Denny 2002: 4–55, 107–109; Denny 2011: 28–30). The discovery of important carpets with Jewish religious symbolism and Hebrew inscriptions has cast new light on so-called Mamluk carpets, Jewish merchants, and the commercial and artistic relationships between Italy and Egypt (Boralevi 1984, 1986; Curatola 2006). Examination of European documents has brought about a new understanding of the reception of Islamic carpets in Europe (Curatola 2006; Denny 2006; Spallanzani 2007). Archival documents have broadened our understanding of the diversity of carpet-producing centers, especially in Anatolia (Barkan 1979: 194–195; Inalcık 1986). This notwithstanding, however, our ability to link specific classes of works of art with specific production centers still remains quite weak.

In the realm of textiles, there have been two major stimuli to further scholarship. The first is the emergence of hitherto unknown and unusual examples from collections in Moscow, Istanbul, and central Europe (Atasoy *et al.* 2002: 180–181). The second has been a wealth of new evidence from archival documents, especially in the Ottoman Empire. These range from documentation of royal gifts to inventories and other sources of information on the popularity and the uses of certain genres of furnishing fabrics (Komaroff *et al.* 2011; Phillips 2011; Rogers 1986).

Commerce and Taxation

Textiles were for centuries if not for millennia a major element of long-distance trade throughout the world. Those areas with access to fiber often cooperated with areas with high weaving and dyeing technology. The *arte della lana*, the wool guild of Florence, developed in part owing to the proximity in Tuscany of supplies of alum, a crucial mordant in the dyeing process. Social and economic stresses in political entities such as Flanders and Florence in Europe, Kirman in Iran, and Ushak in western Anatolia, often stemmed from stresses within their textile industries. No wonder then that textiles had not only a wide public awareness but a crucial role in the polity, the economy, and the culture in early modern times. As early as the high medieval period a major shift in the balance of east–west textile production and trade had taken place. Specifically, technical advances in European textile production, dependent on machines powered by the abundant water of European streams and rivers, led to growing dominance of international markets in everyday textiles (as opposed to high luxury objects) not dissimilar to the role low-cost Chinese production plays in textiles in our own time. The fourteenth-century historian Ibn Khaldun complained bitterly about the use of cheap foreign textiles in Cairene costume, the result of European dumping, to the detriment of the local production (Ashtor 1978). In bullionist Islamic economies of the early modern period, with the massive influx into the Mediterranean economy of specie – gold and silver looted from the New World – it became a concerted part of state policy around the Middle East to encourage the export of luxury Islamic silks and pile carpets to the voracious European markets in return for specie. In the mid-sixteenth century, the Ottoman grand vizier Rüstem Pasha promoted a distinctive Ottoman "brand" that could be exported to Europe; in seventeenth-century Iran, Shah ʿAbbas and his successors continually sought both overland and maritime routes for textile trade with Europe that would bypass the Ottoman realms (Denny 2012; Sardar 2013). Simultaneously (and apparently ineffectively as well) local bullionist regulations sought to discourage the use of gold and silver thread in silk textiles, especially those made to be exported to Europe.

Within the Islamic world, the use of textile taxation as a source of governmental revenue, especially on silk in all of its forms, from cocoon to finished fabric and tailored costume, was probably both enhanced and tolerated by its perception as a "sin tax" like those currently levied on tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and luxury items. Certainly silk taxation provided a major source of Ottoman governmental revenue in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; wars were fought with the Aqqoyunlu Turkmens over the taxation of cocoons and raw silk moving from the Gilan mulberry groves in Iran to the entrepôt at Bursa whence silk made its way to Europe (Atasoy *et al.* 2002: 156–157). Under Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–1520), the Sunni Ottoman campaigns against the recently established Shiʿi Safavid regime had the unexpected outcome of drastically reducing Ottoman state revenues, formerly gained from the lucrative tax on the east–west silk trade. For this reason, among the first acts of Süleyman I upon gaining the Ottoman throne in 1520 was to restore the confiscated assets of Iranian silk traders in Bursa, and to repair the damaged relations with the Safavid merchants who shipped cocoons and raw silk westward to Bursa (Atasoy *et al.* 2002: 157).

Because of the "Ottoman problem" the Safavid rulers of Iran sought various ways of bypassing the traditional entrepôts of Bursa and Aleppo, both under Ottoman rule, in favor of more direct access to European markets. The sea route from the Persian Gulf around the Horn of Africa was one alternative – land transportation across Russia was another. Repeated efforts to outflank the Ottoman Empire, however, mostly resulted in failure (Sardar 2013).

Until their conquest by the Ottomans in 1517, early sixteenth-century Mamluk Egypt and Syria provided another important source of silk for European markets, supplied by the traders of Italian maritime states, particularly Venice. After 1517, the Ottomans enjoyed the all-important advantage of the proximity of Istanbul, Bursa, and Izmir to European markets, but Ottoman Aleppo and Cairo continued to flourish as entrepôts. Although their goods often competed unsuccessfully in Italian and French markets against local production, the sixteenth-century Ottoman style appears to have appealed to the taste of central and eastern European nations that, lacking their own draw-looms, provided a profitable market for Ottoman silks. For this reason, many important collections of Ottoman luxury silks are today to be found in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and above all in Russia; important Islamic silks looted from some of these countries during the Thirty Years War are also found in Sweden (Atasoy *et al.* 2002: 176–181; Geijer 1951).

Commerce in Carpets

European competition with Islamic luxury silks strengthened in the early modern period, as the result of the development of manufactories in France and Italy in particular (Mack 2002: 27–49). By contrast, although imitations of "Oriental" carpets were indeed woven in France, England, and most successfully in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Spain, the surviving evidence from European documents and paintings suggests that the vast bulk of carpets in use in Europe through the eighteenth century and beyond were imported, primarily from the Ottoman Empire, and in smaller quantities from Iran and India. A series of studies published in the journal *Oriental Carpet & Textile Studies* Volume II in 1986 pointed out the ubiquity of carpets in European inheritance records and commercial documents. Although maritime Genoa and Venice provided a major source of the popular Turkish carpets in European markets of the sixteenth century, there was also a considerable trade over land; a fragmentary record from the frontier customs post in Brasov (Brassó, Kronstadt) in Transylvania for a 10-month period in 1502 mentions over 500 "Turkish carpets" passing through the taxing authority, and Brasov was only one of many such posts on many trade routes through central Europe at the time (Batari 1994: 29–31).

The later seventeenth century rise of the *grand gout* in France resulted in declining interest in oriental carpets at the court. But based on the evidence of depictions in European paintings, Oriental carpets continued in popularity in middle-class Holland throughout the eighteenth century (Ydema 1991), and with the flourishing of the colonial empires of France and England in the nineteenth century, Oriental carpets once again found their way into the palette of European taste, as a component of nineteenth-century Orientalism. By the later nineteenth century, carpets from the Islamic world were highly popular in parts of the United States such as New England, where they were successfully marketed by immigrants of Middle Eastern descent, many of them Armenian. And the Gilded Age collectors of America, emulating the French and British aristocracy, furnished their Fifth Avenue mansions in New York with vast quantities of old Islamic carpets of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries; many of these now form the nuclei of carpet collections in great American museums, especially in those in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Washington, and Chicago.

Creativity and Style: The Art of Making Textiles

High-art textiles – the kind most often studied by art historians and found in museum collections – were largely created of more prestigious and expensive fibers, especially silk, and, as mentioned, were woven on immensely complex machines known as draw-looms. However, in studying such high-art textiles, the art historian must always be aware that high-art textiles – indeed all textiles – are highly perishable, and were often regarded as ephemera, to be used, and eventually to be worn out and discarded. The result is that a researcher must be extremely wary of making too-encompassing broad generalizations about the history of Islamic textiles based on what are almost always a relatively few surviving examples compared to what may once have existed. Entire groups of important textiles and carpets documented in paintings and historical records have undoubtedly vanished from the face of the earth. The appearance of a particular type of carpet in a seventeenth-century Dutch painting, with no actual examples surviving until a few surfaced recently in Japan, is a cautionary tale for those who mistakenly believe that "all we have is all there was" (Kamada 2011).

As noted, the designs of Islamic silk textiles frequently reflect styles and motifs in common use in other media such as drawings, book illuminations, illustrations and bindings, or architectural decoration. Simple textiles of one color without patterns were easiest to weave and did not require the participation of a designer in programming the draw-loom, and consequently their prices tended to be lower, and more dependent on the variables of labor, dyes, and materials. Even in luxury fabrics woven of silk, the vast majority were one-color shiny satin fabrics rather than the extremely expensive figured examples. Because the draw-loom's structure ordinarily dictates the repeating of patterns over and over again in a bolt of cloth, simply by repeating the set of manipulations of warp and weft programmed into the loom, smaller repeating patterns were cheaper and quicker to execute than large ones. Certain techniques, such as cut-pile velvet, required far more material for a given length of fabric, and were consequently more expensive. Fabrics including infinitesimally fine strips of gold or silver wire or foil wrapped around a core of silk thread were not only showier but cost a good deal more than simpler fabrics.

There has been some debate about the role of the centralized design atelier (*kitabkhana* or *nakkaşhane*) in carpet and textile production. While there is no doubt whatsoever that the styles pioneered in Islamic courts diffused into various media and production centers, the closeness of relationships between the two varied widely. Some Safavid and Ottoman carpets almost certainly were created from full-scale cartoons, a mode of production that, while involving a division of artistic labor, required a high degree of artistic as well as technical skill on the part of the carpet weaver. Other carpets may have been woven from a knot plan, a complex series of written instructions (known as a *talim*) that in effect made the weaver into an automaton (Thompson 2006: 178–185). In textiles, the largest-scale and most complex designs were the most likely to have been created directly from drawings originating in the court, but designs with smaller-scale repeats were easily produced by the weaving ateliers themselves, utilizing motifs from the court repertoire. In the Ottoman tradition, the designs utilized by the *kemha* (lampas) weavers of Istanbul often show a very close relationship to the court design atelier, while the weavers of *seraser* (cloth-of-silver, taqueté) fabrics seem for the most part to have created their own designs. And the velvet weavers of Ottoman Bursa, while aware of the floral design repertoire of Istanbul, almost certainly designed their popular furnishing fabrics themselves (Atasoy *et al.* 2002: 160–162). In carpets and textiles, there are works and documents demonstrating a close relationship between the Ottoman *nakkaşhane* and weaving manufactories, and other works and documents suggesting that the two entities often had little to do with one another on a specific production level.

In the case of carpets, great weaving centers such as Ottoman Ushak or Safavid Kashan undoubtedly had the capacity to generate designs independently of centralized court ateliers. At the same time, however, certain court styles were imposed on weaving centers from a great distance, such as the designs of Ottoman "court" carpets woven of Egyptian materials dyed in traditional Egyptian colors in Egypt. In the later sixteenth century, probably to tighten control of the final product, weavers from Cairo were summoned to Istanbul, and ordered to bring with them a large quantity of their own counter-clockwise-spun and locally dyed Cairene wool (Erdmann 1976: 51). Later, as Ottoman court control of Cairene weaving declined along with court patronage, Cairene weavers continued to produce carpets in "court" designs for export to Europe, but the artistic and technical level of the products could not compare with that of the earlier court-influenced carpets (Denny 1986).

Within almost every category of fabric, there were carefully defined (and often legally mandated) levels of price and quality, enforceable by the official known as the *muhtasib*, that today create both opportunities and dilemmas for the modern scholar. For example, there appears to be only one surviving example of the highest quality of the Ottoman cloth-of-gold or cloth-of-silver known as *seraser*, and it is not found in the collections of the Topkapı Palace but in a *sakkos* (dalmatic) with a pattern showing the enthroned Christ, made for a Moscow prelate and now preserved in the Kremlin Armory Museum (Atasoy *et al.* 2002: plate 10). The fundamental economics of woven creativity thus automatically posited a hierarchy of status in the finished product that was heavily dependent on both the expense of its materials and artistry of its design, but interestingly very little on the quality of the tailoring and cut of a garment. The best designers quite naturally gravitated toward the most expensive products.

From the mid-thirteenth century onward, high-art silk textiles in the Islamic Middle East reflected court tastes that were heavily influenced by the textile arts of China (Mack 2002: 15–21, 27–41). By the later fifteenth century local court-sponsored weaving traditions of luxury textiles existed in the Timurid and

Turkmen lands of Iran and Central Asia, in the Mamluk realms of Egypt and Syria, and in Ottoman Bursa and Istanbul. By 1600 Islamic court textiles and carpets were being created both in Mughal north India and in the principalities of the Deccan in south India. As important dynasties began to found royal design ateliers, professional designers trained in the arts of the book began to create designs for other media, including textiles. In earlier Timurid times the draw-loom weavers themselves appear to have been somewhat resistant to adapting new court styles. This may explain why under the Timurids, embroidery or needlework – the art of adding pattern to single-color silk fabrics by a needle and colored silk or metallic threads – and carpet weaving – where a technique that was essentially nothing more than a dot matrix of tiny knots of colored wool proved highly adaptable to new designs and layouts – began to flourish in the second half of the fifteenth century (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 189–220). In the fourteenth century and later, medieval draw-loom traditions in the Islamic west continued to develop in Nasrid al-Andalus, whence their products were exported to compete with those of Italy and the imported Mongol-influenced silks produced in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks (May 1957).

By 1440, Italian silk weaving, previously established in Lucca, Venice, Genoa, and Bologna for centuries, was beginning to spread to other locations. While Spanish production waned (Constable 1994: 173–175), emerging centers such as Lyon continued to share a sense of what was appropriate and traditional in silk design, a sense heavily molded by Islamic and Chinese silk precedents. But the raw material for these centers still came from the East, and for the future of silk weaving in the three early modern Islamic empires – Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal – silk commerce and artistic innovations in late-fifteenth-century Iran and Egypt were highly important.

One aspect of Islamic textiles that has recently gained attention is not the mere fact of their incorporation into European material culture but the manner in which they reflect non-Muslim minorities within Islamic civilization. Ottoman textiles created with Byzantine motifs, and made for Orthodox church use; *parokhet* (Torah curtains) incorporating a mixture of Islamic and Jewish symbolism, as well as domestic embroideries exemplifying the extraordinary diversity of communities and community artistic activities in the Islamic world are changing our entire perception of the scope and variety of Islamic textile art (Atasoy *et al.* 2002: 178; Boralevi 1984; Denny 2002: 44–49; Denny 2011: 26–30; Krody 2000).

Textiles and Carpets in the Ottoman Empire

Textiles and carpets produced under the Ottomans survive, as mentioned, in impressive numbers. Three techniques predominate: *kadife* or *çatma* (Ottoman velvet, usually in one or two colors of pile with voided areas often brocaded in silver-gilt foil-wrapped thread known as *sim*); *kemha* (lampas, a brocaded fabric in compound weave, normally consisting of varicolored motifs in twill weave on a single-color satin background); and *seraser* (taqueté), which in Ottoman times was usually cloth-of-gold or cloth-of-silver, frequently ornamented with large-scale and often eccentric brocaded motifs in two, and rarely four, colors.

Among the most popular layouts were the ogival lattice and parallel wavy vines with flowers, although many other layouts were also used. The earliest surviving Ottoman *çatma* velvets, thought to have been woven in Bursa in the second half of the fifteenth century, are often decorated with variations of the *çintemani* motif of three circular "pearls" accompanied by a pair of wavy lines originally symbolizing divine fire. A few fragments of surviving early Ottoman *kemha* suggest a weaving tradition heavily influenced by contemporary styles in bookbinding and manuscript illumination (*tezhib)*.

After 1550, when active governmental support brought about a vast expansion in Ottoman silk weaving in Istanbul, Ottoman silks of all kinds, but especially the *kemha* brocaded fabrics, reflect the full range of Ottoman court style, from the complex *saz* foliage of lanceolate leaves in complex patterns, to the beloved repertoire of stylized flowers first popularized by the court artist Kara Memi around 1555–1565. Unlike the ceramic art of Iznik, which underwent a precipitous decline in both quality and quantity of production after *c.* 1610, Ottoman woven silks appear to have sustained a significant level of artistic quality, at least at the best and most expensive level of production, throughout the seventeenth century. This artistic resilience can be seen in a *serenk* textile woven at the end of the sixteenth century in Istanbul, at a time when yellow silk was substituted for forbidden gilt-silver thread in *kemha* textiles (Figure 37.2). These limitations notwithstanding, the designers produced one of the most attractive examples of Ottoman silk to have come down to us.

Ottoman embroidered textiles with court designs that can confidently be dated to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are quite rare, but a few surviving examples suggest a close relationship with court styles similar to that observed in woven silk fabrics. A few tiny fragments of *yazma* or printed cotton fabric with court designs still extant suggest that the influence of the *nakkaşhane* extended beyond the range of luxury silks into more humble fabrics (Denny and Krody 2012: 42–45, 88–91).

The widespread use of luxury silks in Islamic civilization was well established and fairly well documented during the later Middle Ages; the same cannot be said for a more emblematic form of weaving, that of knotted-pile carpets. Carpets from the Ottoman Empire present a different history and evolution. A long history of pile carpet weaving in Anatolia stretches back at least to the thirteenth century, before which time its origins are still the subject of speculation. Among the few sources, Marco Polo mentioned both luxury silks and Anatolian pile carpets in a famous passage describing his visit to Konya in the year 1292. By the mid-fifteenth century both south-central Anatolia (roughly the area of modern Konya province) and west-central Anatolia (around the city of Ushak) appear to have been centers of a vigorous commercial production; the early Ushak carpets,

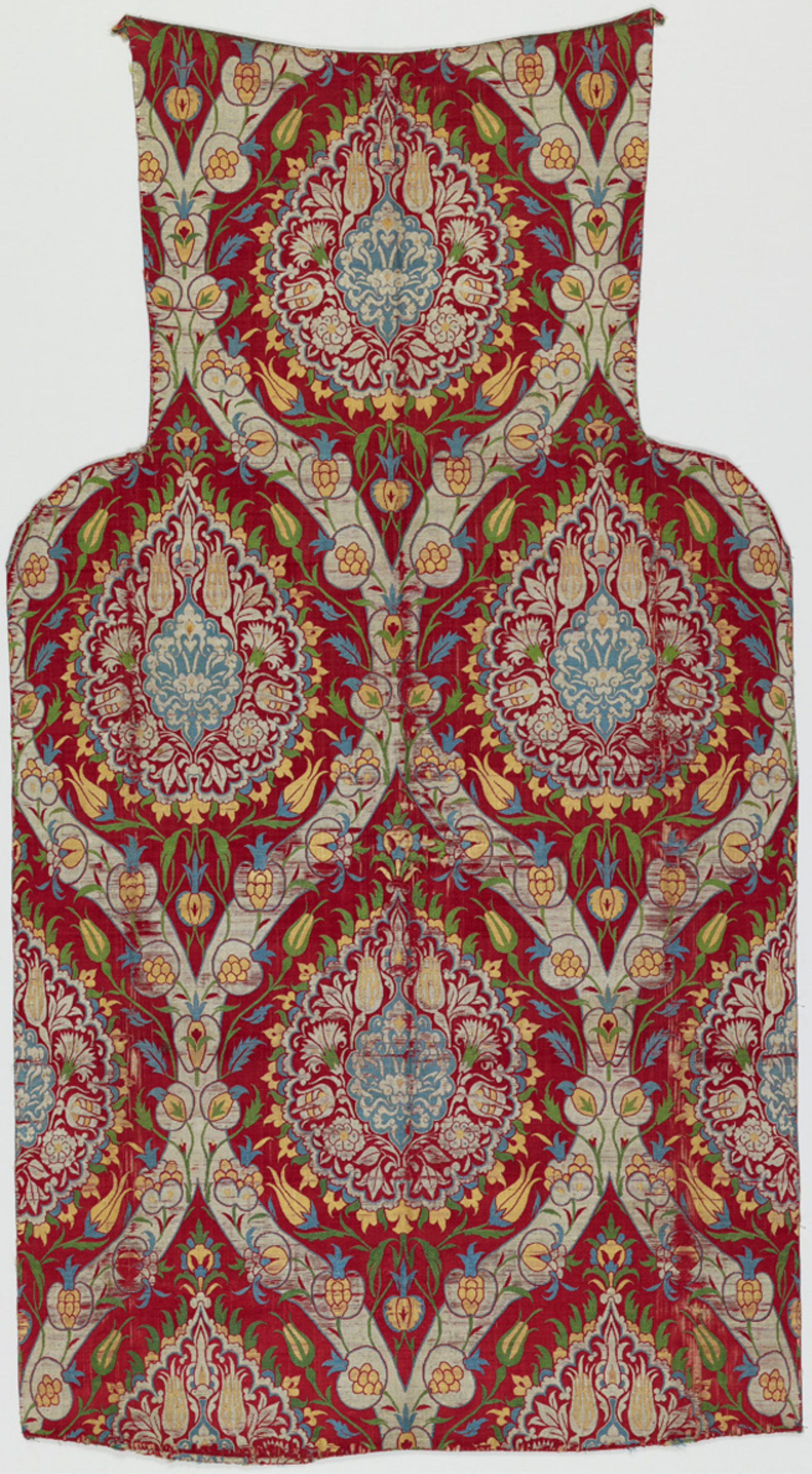

Figure 37.2 Silk *serenk* panel from a garment, Ottoman, Istanbul, late sixteenth century. 126.5 × 69 cm. Source: The Textile Museum, Washington DC, 1.57. Acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951. Reproduced with permission.

usually large in size and exported in significant numbers to Europe, show designs clearly related to the prevailing late fifteenth-century Timurid–Turkmen "international style," with their echoes both of the medallions favored in architectural ceramics and in the arts of the book (Raby 1986). The style is characterized by the split-leaf arabesque referred to in the Turkish sources as *rumi* (literally: "from Anatolia" or the Ottoman lands) and in Persian sources as *islimi*. It comprised a repertoire of round-edged "oak leaves," serrated lanceolate leaves, lotus blossoms sometimes termed *hatayi* (literally, "from Cathay" or China), and a fondness for all sorts of medallion forms both ogival and deeply serrated. Design and layout types established during this period continued to dominate Ushak production well into the eighteenth century. Other Anatolian carpet-weaving centers in both central and west Anatolia adhered to a tradition of weaving mostly smaller pile carpets with geometric designs, closely related both to village and nomadic traditions. These were also exported westward in significant numbers. Other, more remote centers appear in documents, although we cannot at present identify their artistic products: Tire (whence carpets for the Süleymaniye Mosque were ordered around 1558) and Çemişgezek are among these.

Textiles of Mamluk Egypt and Syria

Mamluk carpets, thought to have been woven in Egypt, show several unique features in the Islamic carpet repertoire, the most unusual being their use of counter-clockwise-spun or S-spun wool. Constructed of shiny wool, tied in an asymmetrical knot, and using a limited range of colors, usually with little or no undyed white wool appearing in their designs, Mamluk carpets have inspired a host of conjectures as to their design origins. In fact, if we look at the earliest of these carpets, such as a famous example in Vienna (Volker 2001: 36–41), we realize that the farther back into the fifteenth century the tradition goes, the more its examples tend to show strong resemblances to the Anatolian carpets being woven at the same time. Egypt is a somewhat anomalous venue for pile carpet weaving, because of its climate, ecology, and native customs; it is possible that "Mamluk" carpet weaving may have been introduced into Egypt by the mid-fifteenth century by its Turkic rulers, the Mamluks, as an explicitly commercial venture oriented toward European markets. These carpets, using a limited range of either three or five colors, constituted a recognizable Egyptian "brand" in the international marketplace. After the Ottoman conquest in 1517, Cairene weavers continued the older Mamluk carpet-weaving traditions, but around 1550 they also began to weave carpets that, while using local wool, dyestuffs, and weaving techniques, incorporated designs in the *saz* and floral styles that probably originated in the *nakkaşhane* in Istanbul. Such Cairene "Ottoman" carpets also became a recognized brand in the international market, and continued to be woven and exported to Europe into the late seventeenth century.

In the realm of silk textiles, because the Mamluk domains included several western termini of the web of commercial routes we conventionally call the "Silk Road," from Damascus and Aleppo in the north to Red Sea ports and Cairo itself in the south, silk was readily available both as a raw product and as Iranian and Chinese finished goods in the Mamluk domains. Close Mamluk–Italian commercial relations, especially through Venice, from the fourteenth century onward, make it reasonable to believe, as Louise Mackie has suggested (Mackie 1984), that layouts originating in China, such as the omnipresent ogival lattice, might have made their way to European weaving centers such as Lucca via either Chinese originals or Mamluk luxury silks imported into Italy from Egypt. Despite numerous documents referring to the commerce in silk carried on in Mamluk domains, however, only a very few examples of woven Mamluk silks have survived. These tend to use motifs such as the lotus, that readily proclaim their East Asian heritage, in relatively small-scale repeating designs, in damask weaving, where a single color of silk produced figured designs by variations in surface texture and reflectivity, and in layouts amenable to small-scale repeats, such as the lattice or stacked or staggered horizontal rows of motifs. Many surviving Mamluk silks show a propensity to utilizing Chinese motifs such as the ubiquitous lotus blossom, and repeats tend to be on a small scale. Part of a tiny garment fashioned of Mamluk silk, possibly made for a statuette of the Virgin Mary in a Roman Catholic church, demonstrates both the complexity of Mamluk textiles and their continuing echoes of Chinese forebears (Figure 37.3).

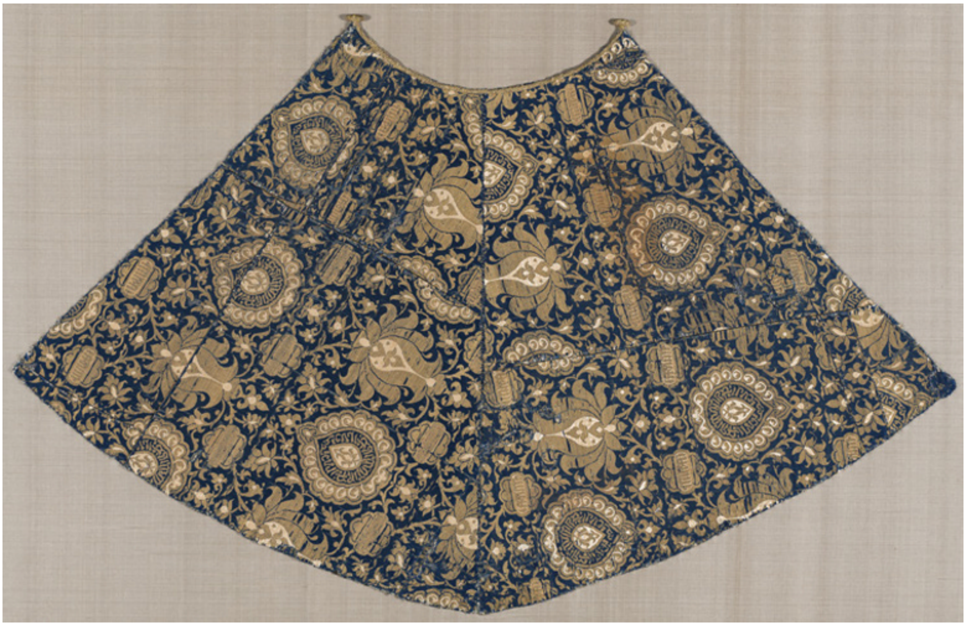

Figure 37.3 Silk mantle for a statuette of the Virgin Mary, Mamluk, fourteenth century. 70.5 × 111.1 cm. Source: The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, 39.40. Purchased by The J. H. Wade Fund, 1939.

Textiles of the Timurid, Turkmen, and Safavid Realms

While little survives of the Timurid weaving tradition in either carpets or woven silks, the extensive portrayal of luxury fabrics in Timurid paintings and pen-and-ink designs attests to a high level of prominence of luxury textiles in Timurid times. The *kitabkhana* in Herat was the prototypical court design atelier, whose model served for the establishment of similar entities in Ottoman Istanbul, Safavid Tabriz, Qazvin, and Isfahan, and Mughal Delhi, Agra, and Lahore. It was the source of much of the Timurid design that diffused across the broad range of luxury media produced both in the eastern Timurid realms and, after 1450, in the Turkmen courts of Tabriz as well (Lentz and Lowry 1989: 159–238). The small number of mostly fragmentary carpets and woven silk fabrics that survives attests to a high level of quality, but the extensive depictions of textiles and carpets by Timurid painters of the last part of the fifteenth century appear at this point to raise far more questions about Timurid silks and carpets than they answer. A recent development in scholarship has been the attempt to give more weight in the historical development of carpet weaving to the center (Azerbaijan and eastern Anatolia) rather than the west (west Anatolia) or east (Timurid Herat). This includes the ascription of a number of what were previously believed to be early Safavid medallion carpets to Turkmen production in Tabriz, as well as the attribution of the rare and extremely important group known as "para-Mamluk" carpets to the Aqqoyunlu court there (Denny 2002: 23–29; Thompson 2006: 124–149).

By the first half of the sixteenth century, the Safavid inheritors of the Timurid–Turkmen weaving traditions embarked upon one of the most technically complex, artistically diverse, and aesthetically satisfying weaving ventures in world history. Safavid carpets and textiles have survived in far larger numbers than their Timurid or Turkmen forebears, but in nowhere near the quantity of the Ottoman examples. Their rarity, their impressive range of complicated techniques, and their frequent tendency to utilize human and animal imagery closely related to manuscript paintings, have contributed to their high regard among art historians. The range of weaving techniques and the spectrum of colors employed in Safavid luxury silk fabrics and carpets are impressive. From two-color double cloth executed with incredible fineness of detail, to appliqué garments and hangings vividly depicting courtly pleasures, the Safavid fabrics that have survived show a level of accomplishment that is virtually unique in the Islamic world.

Figural velvets executed in a wide range of colors together with silver-gilt foil-wrapped thread are among the most impressive achievements of Safavid draw-loom weavers; surviving sixteenth-century examples are largely fragments. Their designs incorporate a variety of hunting and animal motifs that are such an important a part of Safavid imagery (Thompson and Canby 2003: 276–277) (Figure 37.4). A few examples, largely from the end of the sixteenth and the

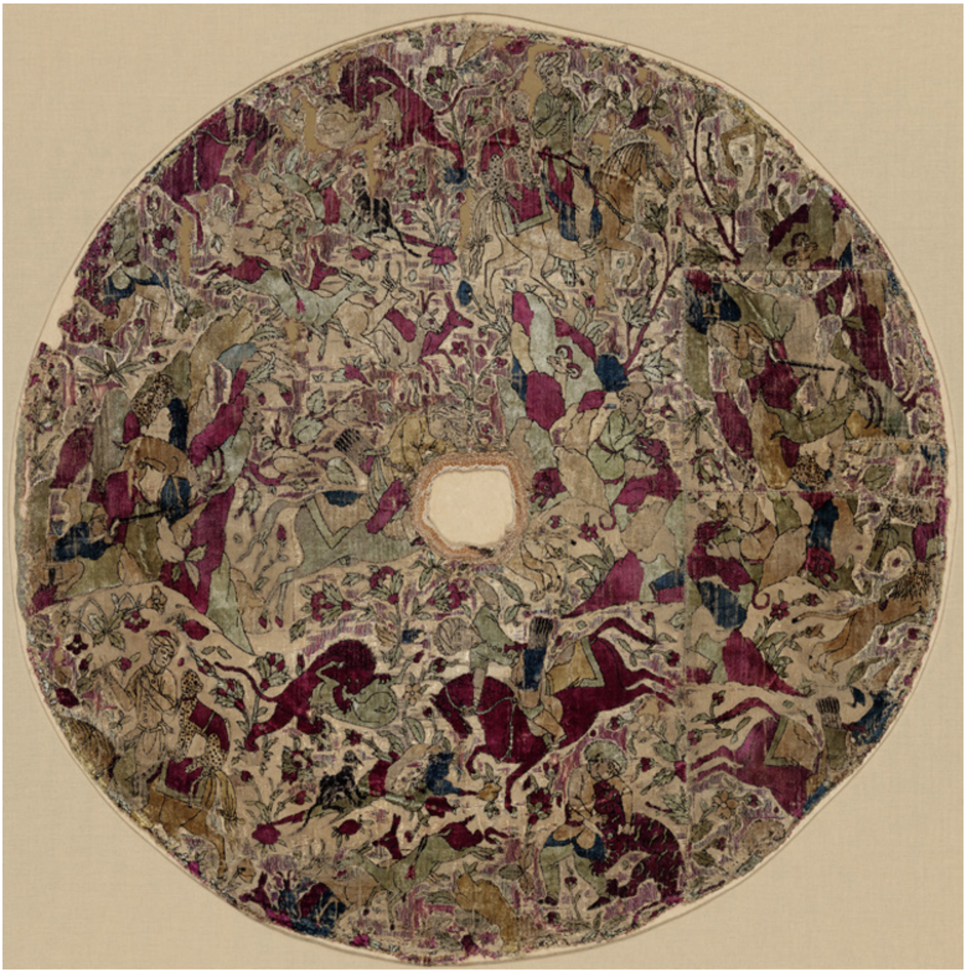

Figure 37.4 Cut and voided silk velvet interior tent ornament, Safavid, Iran, mid-sixteenth century. Diameter: 97 cm. Source: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 28.13. Gift of Mrs. W. Scott Fitz.

seventeenth centuries have survived in loom widths, made into what were evidently luxury hangings. We know that the Safavids also excelled in lampas weaving; a court robe, in virtually pristine condition, whose repeating design depicts a hero hurling rocks at a dragon, is still preserved in the Moscow Kremlin Armory (Thompson and Canby 2003: 320–321; see Farhad, chapter 36). The enormous asset provided to scholarship by the relationship between datable manuscript paintings and undated textiles must, however, be used with caution. It is highly probable that fashions in textile design, such as the depiction of courtiers wearing the characteristic Safavid turban with tall red *kulah* baton in the first half of the sixteenth century, may have persisted on the loom after they had evolved into other styles in the court design ateliers.

Safavid carpets have a somewhat murky origin; as mentioned, various scholars have proposed that certain long and narrow medallion carpets conventionally ascribed to "northwest Iran" may either be the product of Aqqoyunlu Turkmen court looms of the later fifteenth century, or indicate a transition between a fifteenth-century style and the full-blown Safavid style of the sixteenth century (Dimand 1973: 38–39; King and Sylvester 1983: 84–85). There is definitely a hierarchy of quality in Safavid carpets, as well as a very diverse group of weaving centers, from Khurasan in the east to Azerbaijan in the north, to Kashan in the center, Kurdistan in the west, and Kirman in the south. Thus while technique can give us vital information on provenance, it tells us very little about the age of a carpet. Second, thanks to collateral dating and a few inscribed objects, we can now construct a general chronology of sixteenth-century examples. The two so-called Ardabil carpets, the most celebrated and monumental Safavid carpets extant, dated by inscription to 1539, show a style of ornament easily attributable to Tabriz in the 1530s; their place of weaving, however, is far more likely to have been Kashan in central Iran, especially given the fact that in 1534–1535 Tabriz was occupied by the Ottomans (Denny 2010: 68–71).

In the seventeenth century, we have a long sequence of Iranian carpets woven in the so-called vase technique that have more or less confidently been ascribed to the looms of Kirman. These "vase-technique" carpets, with their complex weft structure, are easily the most artistically noteworthy commercial carpet weavings of their own and indeed of any time (Beattie 1976). Also well known are the so-called "Polonaise" carpets, carpets woven of silk pile and brocaded metal-wrapped silk yarns, that were evidently produced in seventeenth-century royal ateliers near Isfahan as gifts to court luminaries and foreign allies. A number of examples woven with Polish coats of arms have given the group its unusual name (Spuhler 1968).

Whereas we know with a reasonable degree of certainty that most surviving Ottoman silks were either woven in the neighborhood of Istanbul or that of Bursa, the effort to pair up surviving Safavid silks with the numerous places of production listed in Safavid documents has not been very successful. We can assume that in the seventeenth century there were extensive production sites in the neighborhood of Isfahan, the Safavid capital, but in the sixteenth the situation is cloudier, especially given the proximity of the then Safavid capital of Tabriz to the reach of Ottoman armies. The city of Kashan is frequently associated with silk weaving in Safavid documents, and, as in the case of the two "Ardabil" carpets, may well have been the site of much Safavid silk textile production. Carpet production from Khurasan or from Yazd is more difficult to ascertain; some Khurasani products, such as the "Portuguese" carpets, are more easily identifiable by their use of *jufti* or double knotting, with each knot tied around two pairs of warps.

Textiles of the Mughal Empire and Deccani Kingdoms

Mughal India, the last of the three early modern Islamic empires to be discussed here, was also the scene of the production of luxury carpets and textiles. While conventional wisdom assumed that carpet weaving in India began in the north under the Mughals, evidence now points to a prior tradition of carpet weaving in the Deccan region of south India, possibly centered in Warangal, which continued to produce large quantities of commercial carpets as late as the eighteenth century (Kamada 2011). Mughal luxury silks and embroideries have not survived in very large numbers; those examples that we do have often show a technical indebtedness to Iran. The relationship between certain seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Safavid and Mughal silks is stylistically very close; recent technical studies by Elisa Gagliardi Mangilli, hitherto unpublished in detail, have shown that under a microscope certain technical features can distinguish the two groups.

In the realm of embroidery, a famous sleeveless hunting vest preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, decorated with fauna and flora embroidered in chain-stitch on a white satin ground, demonstrates that the Mughal court style, as with those of the Ottoman and Safavid lands, extended to highly distinctive luxury products of embroidered silk (Welch 1986: 208–209).

Carpets produced in India under the Mughals include a range of types and techniques. A large group of usually red-ground carpets decorated with rows of flowering plants clearly reflects the Mughal court style, as do those carpets with designs taken directly from manuscript painting, such as the famous Ames Carpet in Boston (Figure 37.5). Very finely woven carpets attributed to Lahore, much sought after by seventeenth-century Europeans, usually exhibit a pile of soft and beautifully dyed *pashm* or cashmere goat wool. A well-documented example is the Girdlers' Carpet in London, commissioned by a London guild, woven in Lahore, and incorporating the guild's coat of arms and motto within a framework of ornament in the Indian style. Also in this group are a few carpets of truly prodigious knot count; a small *sajjadah* or prayer carpet with *pashm* pile from a private collection in Belgium counts almost 2400 hand-tied knots in every square inch of its fabric (Walker 1997: 68–69, 90–91).

A larger group of carpets has for some time existed in scholarly limbo between Iran and India. We know that Iranian weavers emigrated to the Deccan, and that a huge seventeenth-century Deccani carpet was created for the Chihil Sutun, the Safavid palace in Isfahan (Kamada 2011; Walker 1997: 129–136). A recent rule of thumb – that warp yarns composed of four separate cotton yarns plied together denote an Iranian provenance while six-ply or more warps indicate an Indian provenance – has, for the moment at least, placed the vast category of so-called Indo-Isfahan carpets in seventeenth-century Iran (Thompson 2006: 210–215). Carpets of the so-called "Portuguese" type, depicting in their corners a maritime scene including men in Portuguese dress, and once ascribed to India, can now, on the basis of their technique, including irregular and *jufti* or double

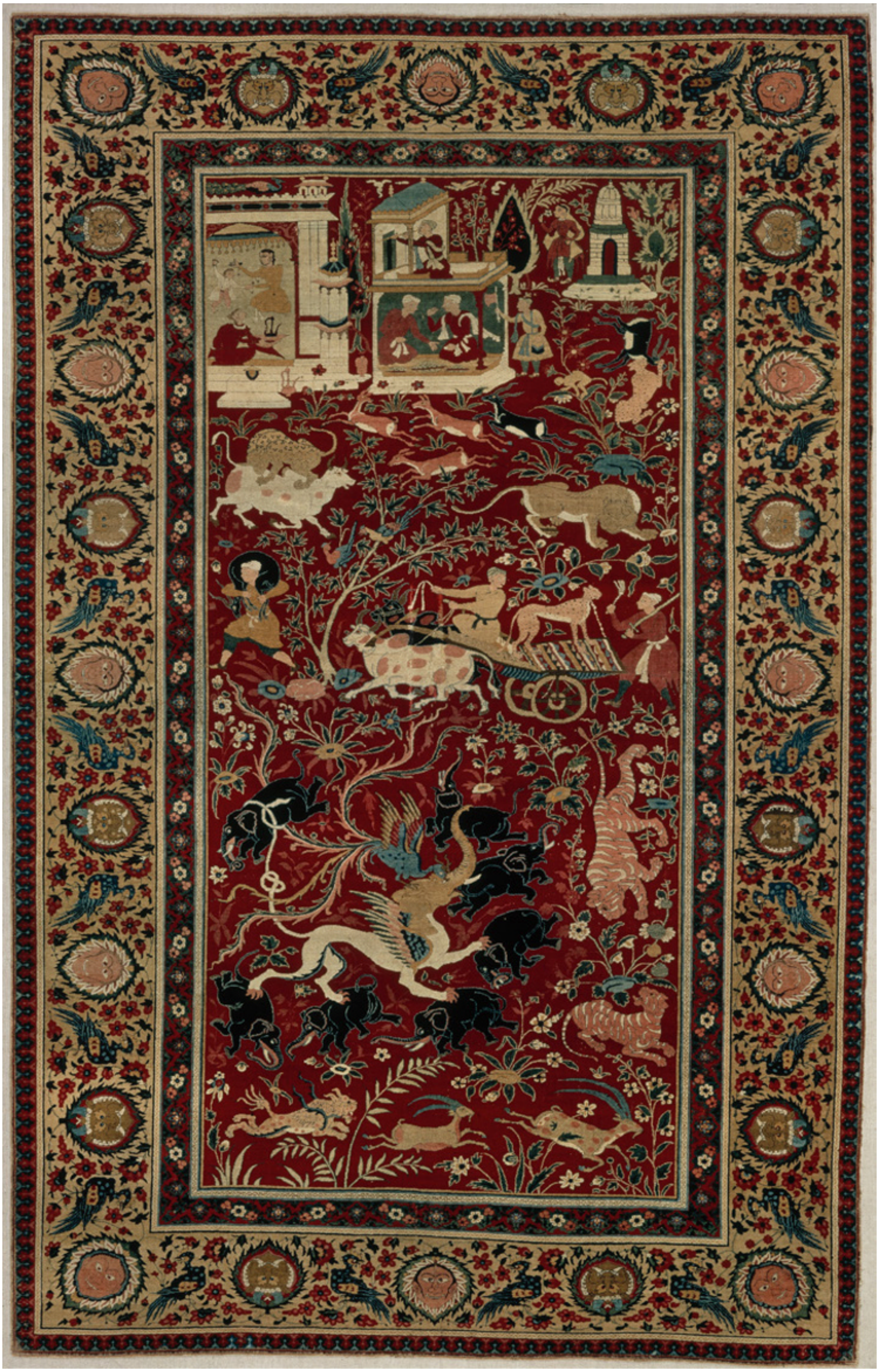

FIGURE 37.5 Wool knotted-pile carpet with pictorial design, Mughal, north India, *c.* 1590–1600. 243 × 154 cm. Source: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 93.1480. Gift of Mrs. Frederick L. Ames in the name of Frederick L. Ames.

knotting, be firmly ascribed to Khurasan. And a number of large medallion carpets once thought to be Iranian, such as the Trinitarias Carpet now in Melbourne, can be ascribed on the basis of certain stylistic features, such as ton-sur-ton coloration, and certain technical features, such as an eight-ply warp, to India (Denny 2012).

Conclusion

Islamic textiles and carpets are certainly among the most prominent of Islamic art forms, and carpets are among the very largest in size, scale, and expense. Despite their importance both in art and in commerce, to this point they have received relatively less scholarly attention than media such as arts of the book, metalwork, or ceramics. The study of carpets and textiles is slowly gaining prominence, but vast areas remain to be explored in detail. Productive future research will integrate a firm knowledge of textile technique and weaving process with a command of the increasing volume of documentary material appearing in print; at the same time, the emergence of dramatic new discoveries of works of art that took place in the later twentieth century may well continue into the twenty-first.

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38

Trade, Politics, and Sufi Synthesis in the Formation of Southeast Asian Islamic Architecture

Imran bin Tajudeen

The Nusantara region, known as *Bilad al-Jawah* in Arab and Persian texts and whose Muslim community was collectively called Jawi in Malay, contains the world's largest Muslim community today. It encompasses the southern half of Southeast Asia and is home to speakers of Austronesian languages. Islam became established as a local cultural force relatively late in this maritime region; around the beginning of the Islamic era Javanese and later Sumatran Malay rulers constructed temple complexes to the Hindu and Buddhist creeds and were patrons of Buddhist centers of learning. Their maritime empires shaped the region's shared aesthetic and linguistic bases, which were inherited by the multiethnic actors behind the pan-Nusantara Islamic culture that flourished in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. This is reflected in the use of the Malay language in trade and in religious literature and diplomacy, and of the Javanese-Indic (or Hindu-Javanese) synthesis in architecture built for Muslim communities. The legacy of the East Javanese Majapahit Empire (1294–1527) was particularly formative for the region's early Islamic architecture.

Surveying selected historic Nusantara monuments, this chapter will explore the bases for claiming the formation of a Nusantara Islamic architecture and how the Nusantara case can be situated within larger discussions regarding the constitution of Islamic architecture in general. The exact processes behind the Islamization of such a large maritime region are complex, but they include changes in trade

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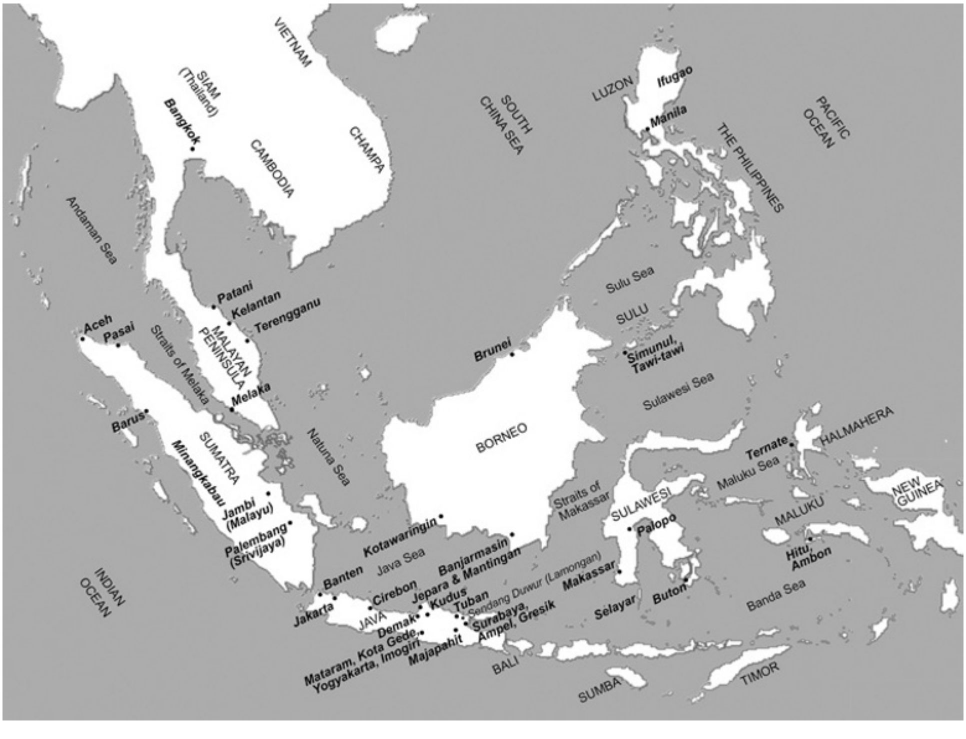
hegemony with the political decline of the pre-Islamic trading empires of Nusantara, the charismatic role of Arab proselytizers, including those based in Indian and southern Chinese ports, and the popular appeal of orthodox Sufi orders (*tariqa*s).

Southeast Asian Islamic Architecture?

The vast archipelago region, or Nusantara, inevitably forms the focus of a survey of "Southeast Asian" Islamic architecture, in contradistinction to the predominantly Buddhist mainland. During its fourteenth-century apogee, the Hindu–Buddhist East Javanese empire of Majapahit united Nusantara through acts of subjugation, tributary relations, and claims of suzerainty. In contrast, during the Islamic period the region comprised various regional Muslim polities that developed in the aftermath of the disintegration of Majapahit and, before that, two other pre-Islamic Malay-speaking Sumatran empires oriented to maritime trade – Srivijaya (Palembang) and Malayu (Jambi) along the Straits of Melaka (then known as Selat or Sea of Malayu)[1] (see Map 38.1). Nonetheless, there existed a Java-oriented emic conception of the maritime region as attested by the


VIETNAM
SIAM (Thailand)
Bangkok
CAMBODIA
CHAMPA
SOUTH CHINA SEA
LUZON
Ifugao
Manila
THE PHILIPPINES
PACIFIC OCEAN
Andaman Sea
Patani
Kelantan
Terengganu
MALAYAN PENINSULA
Aceh
Pasai
Straits of Melaka
Melaka
Brunei
Sulu Sea
SULU
Simunul, Tawi-tawi
Sulawesi Sea
Barus
SUMATRA
Minangkabau
Natuna Sea
BORNEO
Ternate
HALMAHERA
Maluku Sea
NEW GUINEA
Jambi (Malayu)
Palembang (Srivijaya)
Straits of Makassar
SULAWESI
Palopo
MALUKU
Kotawaringin
Java Sea
Banjarmasin
Jepara & Mantingan
Hitu, Ambon
INDIAN OCEAN
Banten
Cirebon
Kudus
Tuban
Sendang Duwur (Lamongan)
Makassar
Jakarta
JAVA
Demak
Surabaya, Ampel, Gresik
Selayar
Buton
Banda Sea
Mataram, Kota Gede, Yogyakarta, Imogiri
Majapahit
BALI
SUMBA
TIMOR

Map 38.1 Map of maritime Southeast Asia indicating places mentioned.

names "Dwipantara" (tenth century) and "Nusantara" (fourteenth century) coined by Javanese polities (both terms denoting "Among-the-Islands,"[2] while the term *Bilad al-Jawah* emerged by the early thirteenth century in Indian Ocean Muslim circles for this region.[3] This latter term remained current into the twentieth century to denote Islamic maritime Southeast Asia. The geographic *nisba* (a part of Arabic names indicating a place of familial or individual origin) "al-Jawi" was commonly used by Southeast Asian Muslims abroad, with more specific *nisba*s denoting town of origin (Map 38.1).

While there are grounds for considering the region as a field of study, what permits one to speak of a "Southeast Asian Islamic architecture"? In *The Formation of Islamic Art*, Oleg Grabar attempted to outline the problematic for a self-critical study of early Islamic art. Southeast Asia provides an interesting context for the study of the kind of "symbiosis" between the "local" and the "pan-Islamic" that Grabar refers to. He considered neither maritime Southeast Asia nor neighboring southern India and southern China. Yet the locally rooted visual culture of these maritime Asian regions illustrates his observation that in areas where Islamic art was not "one that overpowered and transformed ethnic or geographical traditions," it became rather "one that created some peculiar kind of symbiosis between local and pan-Islamic modes of artistic behavior and expression." Further, Grabar (1987: 2) contended that Islamic art was "like a special overlay, a deforming or refracting prism which transformed … some local energies or traditions."

The nature of the "local" in the formation of Southeast Asia's Islamic art needs some explanation. If by the term "classical" we mean, after Grabar (1987: 11), the "wide cultural acceptance of certain forms as identifying the culture's functional and aesthetic needs, repetition of standardized forms and designs, quality of execution at various levels of artistic production, [and] clarity in the definition of visible forms," then the "local" element comprised both an autochthonous-Indic classicism and a pan-regional vernacular based upon such features as Malay as a literary medium and lingua franca that itself attained the status of the "classical." The first known local Islamic polities emerged in the late thirteenth century in northern Sumatra within a Malay-speaking maritime civilization previously centered in southeast Sumatra's Buddhist polity of Malayu, dominated politically by East Java's Majapahit. The oldest extant Southeast Asian Islamic text, a semi-historical genealogical romance (*hikayat*) from Pasai, which ends by describing Pasai's defeat by Majapahit in *c.* 1360 (Hill 1960), is written in classical Malay rather than in Pasai's local Acehnese language.

Meanwhile, Southeast Asian Indic classical art and architecture demonstrated the original synthesis of autochthonous conceptions of the cosmos and those from Indic religions, primarily Shaivism and Mahayana Buddhism, since the earliest extant examples that date from the seventh century. Scholars such as Philip Rawson and James Fergusson emphasize that the expression and content of Southeast Asia's Indic art are local and original, distinct from anything in India, and that Java's unique interpretations of Hindu and Buddhist concepts are particularly outstanding, surpassing the Indic art of the rest of Southeast Asia.[4] Not surprisingly, given its long history of about a thousand years and the bias for Indology among colonial scholars, a glance at surveys of Southeast Asian art betrays a bias for the study of its remarkable Indic synthesis.[5] Southeast Asia is not accorded an important place in even the more recent global surveys of Islamic art and architecture.[6] As a corollary of this situation, historians of Southeast Asia such as Clifford Geertz (1968) and of Islamic art such as Ira Lapidus (2002) have tended to dismiss Islamic art in this region as merely imitative – even degenerative – of its Indic legacy.[7] This despite clear evidence that forms for Islamic use in Southeast Asia reworked the enduring bases from the region's pre-Islamic art and architecture, such as that of fourteenth-century Majapahit. This historiographic peculiarity is somewhat analogous to the prevalence of Iranocentric positions in the study of South Asia's early Indo-Islamic architecture, and the consequent emphasis on a rupture with indigenous South Asian architectural traditions (Flood 2007; Patel 2004)

Grabar's notion of the role of symbiosis in the formative period of Islamic architecture enables the proposal of an alternative, more nuanced narrative to oppose the dim view of Southeast Asian Islamic art described above. Southeast Asian Islamic art was not simply a direct continuation (or degeneration) of the region's pre-Islamic art. New sources of symbolic signification derived from the Islamic cultures of the West provided conceptual bases – or in Grabar's terms an "overlay" – that "transformed" local traditions in the formation of independent Southeast Asian Islamic traditions. Three historiographical and methodological problems are discussed in the ensuing sections, in reference to principles that underlie different kinds of architecture. Focus is given to subregional distinctions and interactions.

Range and Scope of Existing Surveys

In the urban context of various fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Muslim-ruled maritime principalities that flourished in the region, various palaces, water gardens containing diverse structures, and public works were constructed. Some port-cities like Melaka, Demak, Aceh, Banten, Brunei, Banjarmasin, and Makassar became centers of new Muslim maritime empires. Meanwhile important religious and funerary complexes were also deliberately sited away from urban centers, following a long-established tradition of *patapan* (meditation retreats) in Java. These built works are neglected in existing region-wide surveys. Many existing surveys of Southeast Asia's Islamic architecture are also geographically limited (typically to Java) and do not provide a holistic regional overview. Those that attempt a regional outlook focus only on mosques without placing them in the context of the architecture of other Islamic structures (A. Halim 2004; Dijk 2007, O'Neill 1994; Sumalyo 2000). While Behrend (1984) also discusses palaces (*kraton*) and garden complexes (*taman*), and a recently completed doctoral dissertation includes a number of burial complexes (Wahby 2007), both works are restricted to Java rather than dealing with the broader Nusantara region. Existing surveys also tend to be descriptive rather than analytical (A. Halim 2004; Zakaria 1994), or they have analyzed typology but neglect a comparative regional perspective (Budi 2004; Wahby 2007). There is no attempt to discuss the factors relevant to the formation of Islamic art and architecture in the region.

The Sense of a Region

Ties of diplomacy and trade have linked the maritime communities of Nusantara and West Asia since the pre-Islamic period (Meglio 1970). Islam added a new dimension to these longstanding links – Muslims from Southeast Asia traveled to Mecca, Medina, Cairo, and Central Asia for scholarship and were affiliated with various Sufi orders.[8] The antiquity and extent of these links are slowly emerging from the sources.[9] Nusantara's Muslim polities also cultivated links with contemporary West Asian centers of Islam, whether these were represented by the Ayyubid rulers of Egypt,[10] Persian scholars from Delhi,[11] sixteenth-century Ottomans rulers, or the sharif of early seventeenth-century Mecca.[12]

Yet, despite these connections, Southeast Asia's Muslim communities operated within an autochthonous pan-regional Islamic tradition. One of the best-known early Southeast Asian Islamic scholars, Shaykh Hamzah al-Fansuri (of Fansur [Pancur], Barus, northwest Sumatra), who died in 1527 and was buried in Mecca (Guillot and Kalus 2008), declared that he was "neither Persian nor Arab" and, for the benefit of his brethren from the region, wrote in Malay, the regional lingua franca, rather than in his native dialect, and translated works into Malay (Riddell 2001: 108). Rare glimpses into the art of the illuminated manuscript or letter in Islamic Southeast Asia reinforce this sense of differentiation-within-engagement. The few extant sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents include those where Arabic script was used alongside older regional scripts – the illumination of these manuscripts, while modeled on Perso-Arabian precedent, was distinct in color scheme and local motifs.[13] Annabel Gallop's study (2003) of several letters written before 1650 shows that Malay letter-writing in the Islamic period had its own epistolary conventions that were not borrowed from Persian or Arabic styles, while Southeast Asian Qur'ans are distinct and, more importantly, can be divided into several subregional traditions (Gallop 2007).

Southeast Asia's cosmopolitan Muslim communities also operated within an older Hindu-Buddhist syncretic regional culture that included distinct subregional traditions. The region's earliest autochthonous Islamic artifacts are fourteenth- and fifteenth-century tombstones. These come from the region of Pasai/Aceh in northern Sumatra where they were produced under a string of early local Muslim port-polities, and from the Majapahit capital in East Java.[14] Their motifs remained current into the twentieth century, and point to the reworking of Javanese-Indic and local forms and motifs for an unprecedented artifact type, indicating a situation consistent with later developments, namely that Southeast Asian Islamic art owed its complex web of associations and formal innovation to a "classical" pre-Islamic regional culture that was already well formed, and upon which regional variations had accrued.

Categories and Contexts: Mosque Halls and Mausolea

The existence of a recognizably distinct regional tradition with yet further subregional differentiation warrants a more detailed and rigorous consideration of Southeast Asia as a field of study for Islamic architecture than has thus far been attempted. Zakaria Ali's (1994: 383, 407) "pure and diluted dichotomy" model in *Islamic Art in Southeast Asia* is by far the only pan-regional framework to have been devised, but its notion of a dichotomy between the "Javanized form of Islamic art" as "issuing from the diluted half," and "the Malay form" as "issuing from the pure half" ignores the shared pre-Islamic bases for form and ornament between the two traditions and does not address how Southeast Asia's artistic cultures have coalesced or combined in the fluid maritime context. These may be more accurately understood through the framework of typology and model variations (even apart from questions of the ascribed Hindu or Islamic affiliation of forms and concepts), which will be demonstrated in this chapter through examples that reveal a far more complicated scene.

Beyond Demak: Model Variations and their Multiple Genealogies

The *tajug* mosque is a case in point. The *tajug* is the most widespread form of the Southeast Asian mosque, characterized by a square plan and a tiered pyramidal-hip roof (*tajug*). It is structurally distinct from the ritual cock-fighting pavilion (*wantilan*) and the deity tower (*meru*), two building forms with which it is often compared (Figure 38.1). Existing surveys hold up the Friday mosque at Demak in northern Java as furnishing the *tajug* mosque prototype, where four principal columns (*soko guru*) support the top tier of a three-tiered pyramidal-hipped roof (Dijk 2007; O'Neill 1994). This assumption is problematic, as it does not acknowledge the great diversity of both outward form (number and profile of roof tiers) and structural format (number and arrangement of core columns) in early mosques that indicate that there were multiple models of *tajug*-type mosques with distinct genealogies from various pre-existing autochthonous regional traditions that are related yet differentiated.

The disregard for rigor in understanding Southeast Asian architectural typology and history also explains why several accounts of the *tajug* mosque identify Chinese pagodas or Malabari or Kashmiri mosques as antecedents, based on

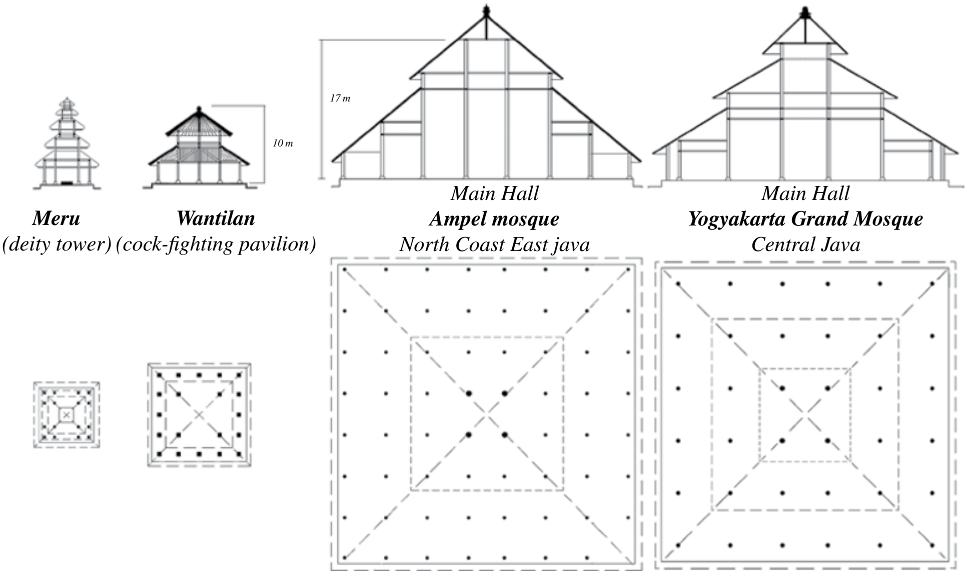


FIGURE 38.1 Structural distinction between the *tajug* hall (mosque), *wantilan* (cockfighting pavilion), and *meru* (deity tower).

superficial outward resemblance – claims which, from the perspective of structure or construction, are spurious.[15] In fact, Shokoohy (2003: 247–248) has not ruled out the possibility of Southeast Asian influence upon the characteristic wooden, multitiered Malabari mosque, given its peculiarity in the Indian architectural context. This raises the possibility of multidirectional cultural flows between early modern South and Southeast Asia.

The *tajug* roof is also used for the Javanese mausoleum building called the *cungkup*, a new type that was composed of a chamber raised on a high base containing graves. This inner chamber is surrounded by a perimeter gallery whose surrounding lean-to roof eaves are deliberately kept very low in sharp contrast to the elevated central tomb pavilion, as seen in the sixteenth-century *cungkup* of Sunan Bonang in Tuban. There may also be an adjoining antechamber, as seen in the sixteenth-century mausoleums of Sultan Hasanuddin next to Banten's Royal Mosque, and of Sunan Gunung Jati at Gunung Sembung complex, near Cirebon.

There is evidence to suggest that the *tajug* form had already appeared east of Java before or around the time of Demak mosque's construction in the fifteenth century. In the Sulu region of the southern Philippines, a mosque purportedly built in 1380 in Simunul, Tawi-Tawi (Lico 2008: 74–75) features four thick round timber columns (*soko guru*) carved in low relief, the only remains from its original structure.[16] In Maluku (the Spice Islands) at Hitu, Ambon we find the Wapauwe Mosque, which reputedly dates from 1414 and retains archaic decorative details in its thick thatch roof corner eaves, the use of (periodically renewed) bamboo walls, and an old timber finial (*tiang alif*). The widespread acceptance of the *tajug* mosque form from an early period and its ready adaptation to regional variants may indicate its resonance with older notions of the apposite form for a ritually important building.

This supposition is supported by the fact that the etymology of variant names for the same features on the *tajug* roof that remain current centuries after their original meaning has been forgotten indicate that this pavilion form signified sanctity. The finial ornament (*memolo*) in Javanese is the "elixir of life" (*brahma-mula*); the ridge form is curiously called the "ridge of the som" or *perabung som* in Melaka (Abdullah 1978), after the elixir of life (*soma*) (Figure 38.2). "Tajug" was also the pre-Islamic name for the town of Kudus (al-Quds) in Pesisir, Central Java, where the term in addition signified the "holy." Local accounts relate that pre-Islamic Tajug/Kudus was already a sacred place (Ashadi 2006: 66). And while the term denotes the roof form in Javanese, in the Sundanese language of West Java *tajug* denotes the mosque itself, while in Banten the term denoting a mosque is *bale* or meeting pavilion. Wahby's (2007) postulation that the centralized dome favored in some medieval Anatolian monuments influenced the *tajug* mosque appears plausible, but it does not recognize the *tajug* form's deep roots in older local traditions (Figure 38.2).

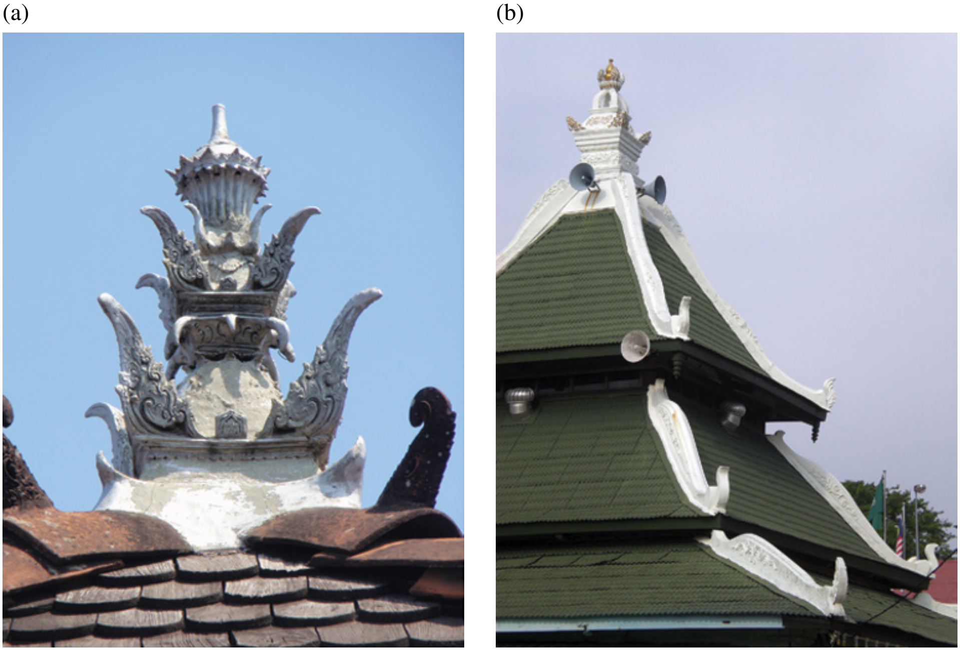


FIGURE 38.2 Roof ornaments and symbolism. (a) Memolo finial ornament from one of the pavilions in Kudus complex, Central Java. (b) Mustaka finial and Perabung Som ridge ornament, Pengkalan Rama mosque, Melaka.

In addition, column and roof configurations are also markers of ritual potency in cult buildings from tribal, non-Muslim groups at the eastern “fringes” of Southeast Asian Muslim maritime society, such as the Ifugao, Timorese, Sumbanese, and Halmaherans (Waterson 1997). The miniature roof tiers atop Banten Royal Mosque (1566, rebuilt 1615) allude to this (Figure 38.3a).

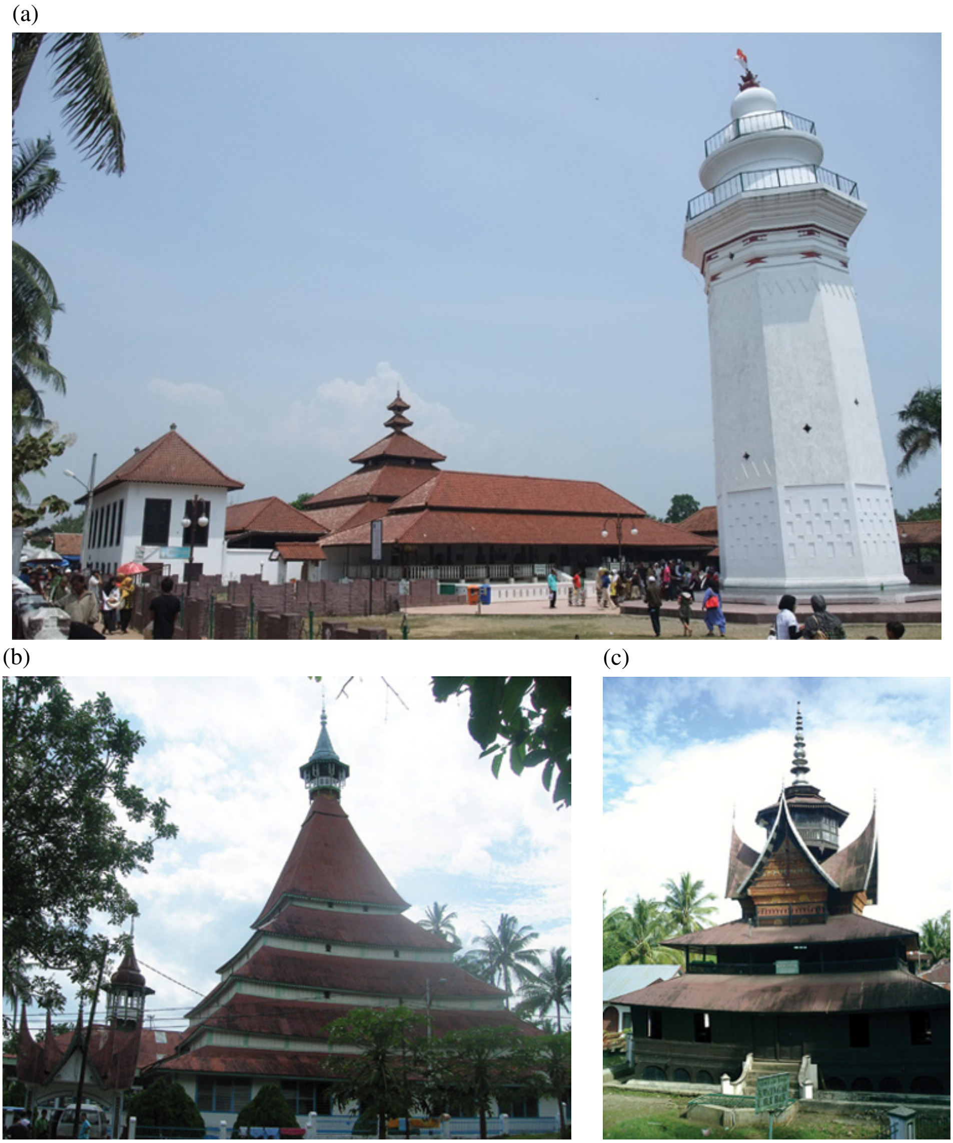


FIGURE 38.3 Roof form. (a) Banten royal mosque, North Coast (Pesisir) West Java, miniature upper tiers of the tajug roof. (b) Limo Kaum mosque, West Sumatra, Minangkabau roof form and central tower. (c) Lubuk Bauk mosque, West Sumatra, Minangkabau roof form with four projecting gables and central tower.

Meanwhile, the term *surau*, which denotes a small prayer hall in Malay and Minangkabau, is etymologically linked to the Batak term *parsuroan* for an animist shrine (Waterson 1997). A single central column, called the apex column (*tonggak macu*), supports the top *tajug* roof tier Minangkabau mosques, surrounded by either four or eight columns. The apex column may also be built as a central tower (see Figure 38.3b). In fact, the structural and formal aspects specific to Minangkabau mosques in west Sumatra indicate their independent development based on Sumatran models of sacred buildings. This point appears to be supported by the fact that Minangkabau mosques may also feature four projecting gables on the middle or top *tajug* roof tier, akin to the chief's residence (*rumah anjung-anjung*) and the ritual pavilions (*geriten*) of the neighboring Karo Batak (Figure 38.3c).[17] This parallel between Minangkabau and Batak built forms used for different ritual purposes strengthen the hypothesis of their derivation from an older Sumatran ritual building type suggested by the term *surau/parsuroan*. The significance of these structural and formal distinctions is missed in existing surveys that do not apply a rigorous typological analysis and are further constrained by the Demak-as-prototype framework. The two oldest extant examples of Minangkabau mosques are the late sixteenth-century Jao Mosque and the seventeenth-century Syekh (Shaykh) Burhanuddin Mosque. *Surau*s in Minangkabau may also be built in the form of the Minangkabau house form with distinctive upturned saddle-back (*gonjong*) gable roofs.

Two fifteenth-century mosques from Cirebon, north coast West Java further undermine the Demak-precedence hypothesis. The Small Prayer Hall (Langgar Alit) in Kraton Kasepuhan, along with the Minangkabau examples just mentioned, point to an alternative tradition featuring a single central post, a type that appears to have been considered sacred or ritually significant in Majapahit Java. Early mosques may well have begun as small five-pillared structures like Cirebon's Langgar Alit, while one of the five ritually important pavilions found in the Elevated Ground (Siti Hinggil) court of the same palace complex is also built with a sacred central column (Figure 38.4a, b).

The pavilions of Kasepuhan's Siti Hinggil court are likewise noteworthy for their different column configurations set on high brick bases of various designs, while the Siti Hinggil court in the neighboring junior Kanoman palace features a pavilion built entirely in plastered brick that retains the sacred central column formation. Numerous pavilions and gateways of classical Majapahit design are also found in the sixteenth-century terraced burial complex of Gunung Sembung, where Syarif Hidayatullah (Sunan Gunung Jati), founder of Cirebon's Muslim dynasty is buried. These extant Cirebon pavilions give a sense of the variety of pavilion types being built during the early Islamic period and how the mosque hall was an emerging form that could be developed from a number of available types. This supposition appears to be strengthened by the distinct structural and formal type seen in Java's second key historical mosque from Cirebon, Sang Cipta Rasa, the royal mosque of Kraton Kasepuhan (1480) – a rectangular plan hall with

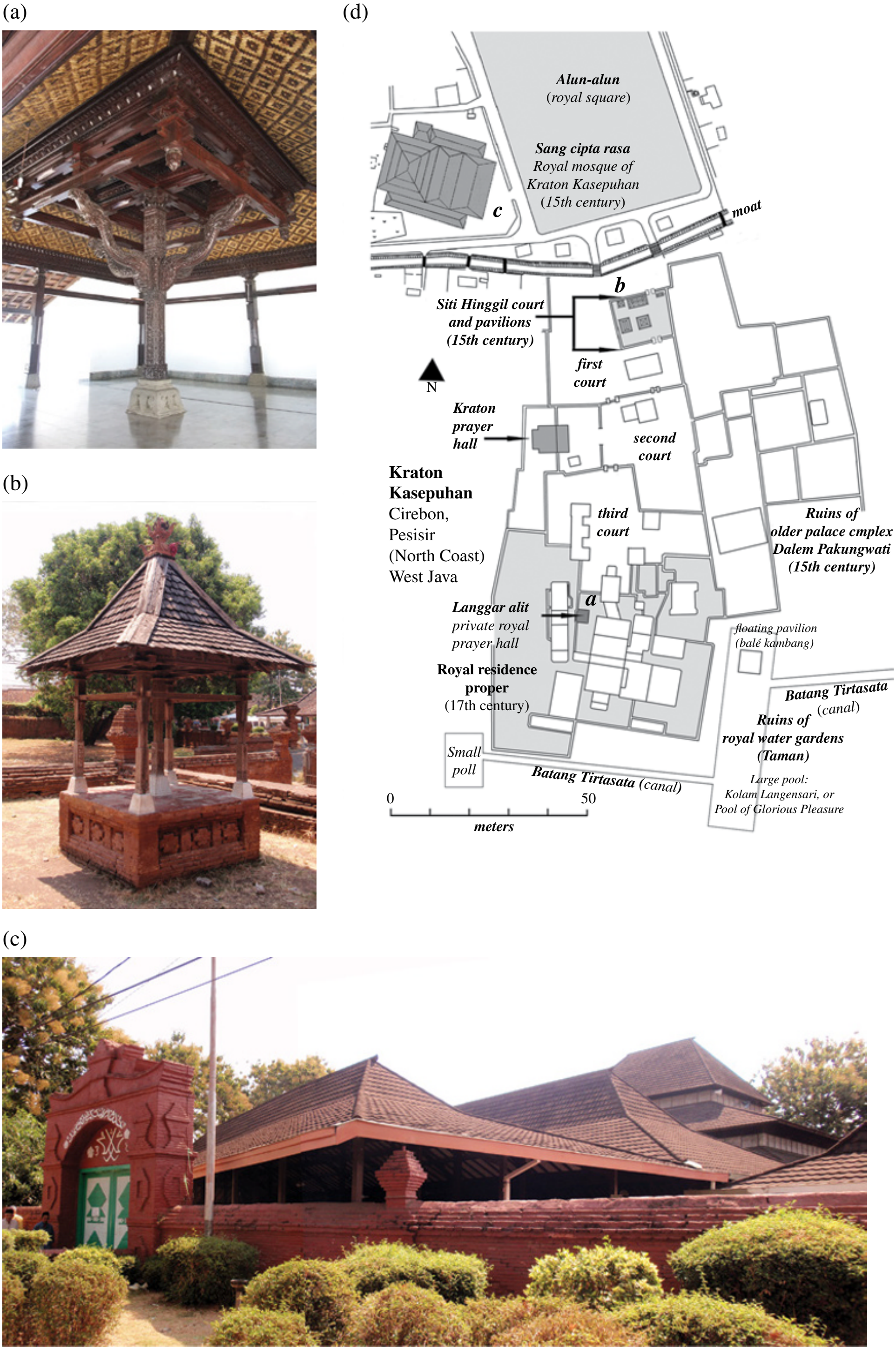

(a)
(d)
Alun-alun
(royal square)
Sang cipta rasa
Royal mosque of
Kraton Kasepuhan
(15th century)
c
moat
b
Siti Hinggil court
and pavilions
(15th century)
first
court
N
Kraton
prayer
hall
second
court
Kraton
Kasepuhan
Cirebon,
Pesisir
(North Coast)
West Java
third
court
Ruins of
older palace cmplex
Dalem Pakungwati
(15th century)
a
Langgar alit
private royal
prayer hall
floating pavilion
(balé kambang)
Royal residence
proper
(17th century)
Batang Tirtasata
(canal)
Ruins of
royal water gardens
(Taman)
Small
poll
Batang Tirtasata (canal)
Large pool:
Kolam Langensari, or
Pool of Glorious Pleasure
0
50
meters
(b)
(c)

FIGURE 38.4 Kraton Kasepuhan (palace complex) in Cirebon, West Java. (a) Central column of Langgar Alit, private royal prayer hall in Kraton Kasepuhan. (b) Five-columned pavilion in the Siti Hinggil court, Kraton Kasepuhan. (c) The Sang Cipta Rasa royal mosque of Kraton Kasepuhan. (d) Plan of Kraton Kasepuhan and the alun-alun royal square of Cirebon, with Sang Cippta Rasa mosque.

12 main columns supporting the top tier of a three-tiered hip roof (Figure 38.4c). It may represent an attempt to adapt another building type for a mosque hall – one that never caught on.

Two other features of early mosques further undermine the thesis that Demak provided the prototype of the *tajug* mosque type. Raised timber platform floors (*panggung*) feature in sixteenth-century *tajug* royal mosques in Brunei, Banjarmasin, Kotawaringin, and Ternate.[18] A Dutch print of Ternate from 1599 shows a three-tier *tajug* mosque, which was described in the accompanying text as being built "on 36 poles twice the thickness and height of a man" (Zakaria 1994: 253–254). Meanwhile five-tiered *tajug* roofs – involving different structural formats from Demak's *soko guru* principle – were common in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century examples, judging by the illustrations or descriptions of the royal mosques of Aceh, Jepara, and Brunei, as well as the Old Mosque at Bitay near Aceh, all no longer extant. A Spanish source records that in 1578 Brunei had a *tajug* mosque "five stories tall and built over water."[19] The aforementioned Banten Royal Mosque has two miniature tiers above its three-tiered roof (see Figure 38.3a), while an early nineteenth-century west Sumatran mosque called Limo Kaum boasts a 55 m tall five-tiered tapered *tajug* roof in the Minangkabau manner (see Figure 38.3b).

Beyond "Traditional" Wooden Structures

Another fundamental methodological problem concerns the situation of Southeast Asian Islamic architecture in modern scholarship between two simplistic temporal categories: an earlier "classical period" for which study is focused upon brick or stone edifices of the Austronesian-Indic synthesis developed chiefly in Java and Sumatra, and a later "traditional" one focused upon wooden domestic architecture (Imran 2013). As mentioned above, existing surveys discuss only mosque halls, which are seen in isolation and are narrowly understood as examples of wooden traditional or vernacular architecture. Yet, the region's mosques and tomb complexes, royal pleasure gardens, and palace complexes are not so easily classified into "classical" masonry forms or "traditional" wooden construction, for they often combine both materials and methods of construction. A focus on the wooden halls of mosques and mausolea also divorces them from their context in complexes of masonry construction (discussed in the section on Courtyard Morphology and Gateways, below). Such combinations are, in fact, a feature of classical pre-Islamic architecture to begin with.

In fact, mosque and mausolea halls may not be built entirely in wood. Stone walls were a feature of the Melaka and Banten royal mosques; the former's laterite stone blocks, coated with lime plaster, were dismantled by the Portuguese in 1511 (Pintado 1993), while the latter, observed in 1598, burned down in 1615 (Dijk 2007: 48). Palopo Mosque (1603) in Luwu, south Sulawesi, features exceptionally thick walls of interlocking dressed stones and moldings characteristic of Javanese temple (*candi*) construction. The plastered stone walls of the mosques of Buton and of Katangka near Makassar are of such great thickness that they give the impression of having been intended as fortresses. Yet other thick brick or stone walls were built as screens surrounding timber pavilions, with the roofs supported by wooden columns that stand independently of these screen walls, in the manner once found in Majapahit structures and still seen today in Bali. This is the case in Cirebon's Sang Cipta Rasa Royal Mosque, whose brick and stone walls enclose the central prayer chamber, independent from the structural columns holding up the roof.

The large seventeenth-century royal mausoleum buildings and tall grave bases of Makassar are also noteworthy. They are built of interlocking stones and are given horizontal moldings in the manner of Javanese stone temple construction from before the sixteenth century (Figure 38.5). Such grave forms are, interestingly, not found in Java.

Intricately carved wooden panels or stone screen walls are a common feature on fifteenth- to seventeenth-century Javanese Islamic buildings and compounds. Geometric ornamental patterns may also be formed by staggering or omitting brick courses to create various kinds of relief patterns and openings (Figure 38.6a). Terracotta and stone wall medallions were already used on Javanese *candi* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for example, in Candi Panataran, but truly remarkable examples with original motifs may be seen in the mosque of Mantingan and Cirebon's Sang Cipta Rasa (Figure 38.6b, c). They display both geometric endless knot motifs, as well as landscape scenes of mountain retreats with pavilions or caves for meditation – these themes were also found in Majapahit Javanese figurative art. Carved scenes of landscapes or abstract geometric patterns in relief are featured on panels, medallions, and roundels that are framed within wall panels or segments. The remarkable set of panels seen in the mosque of Mantingan, however, have lost their original context and are today set into a plain concrete wall. Fifteenth-century Vietnamese blue-and-white tiles of various designs produced specially for the Javanese market have been found in the Majapahit capital and other Majapahit sites, as well as in several mosques such as Demak and Kudus (Figure 38.6d) (Guy 1989; Takashi 2008, 2009). In Cirebon and other Pesisir sites, Chinese and Delft ceramic plates are often set into niches in brick walls as part of a brick or plaster decorative schema (Figure 38.6e). Many of these ornamental systems and motifs appear to have been unique to Javanese Islamic structures. The pre-Islamic motifs found in Majapahit architecture and in tombstone art are also applied to pillar bases and as wall decoration, as seen in Cirebon's Kraton Kasepuhan (Tjandrasasmita 1975a).

Intra-Regional Interactions

In addition to continuities with Majapahit architecture, another feature of early Islamic architecture in Southeast Asia is the degree of regional variation. Two examples indicate the importance of intra-regional architectural interactions in

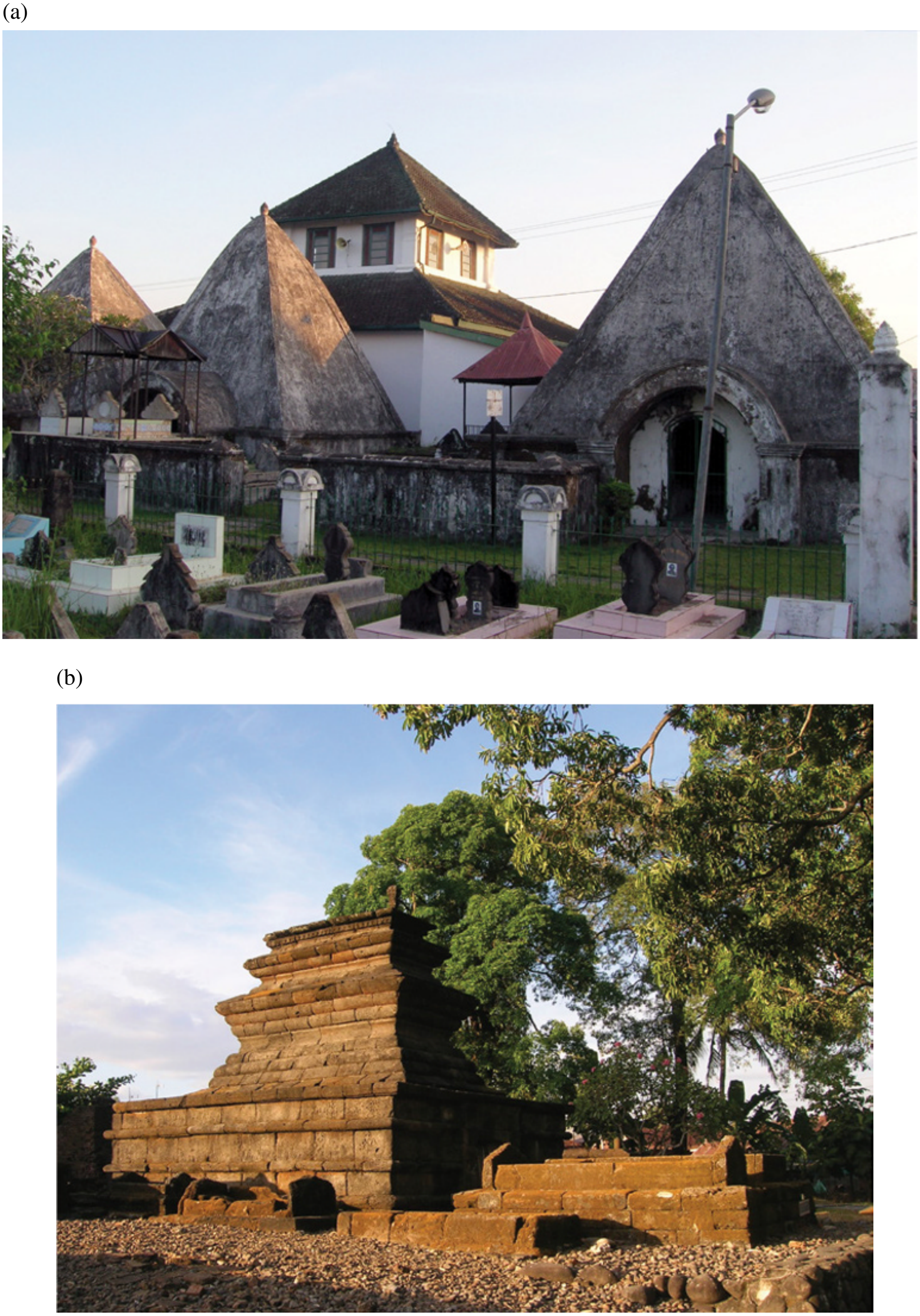


FIGURE 38.5 Royal funerary stone monuments from Makassar, South Sulawesi. (a) Mausoleum buildings around Katangka mosque. (b) Tall grave in Tallo’ Citadel.

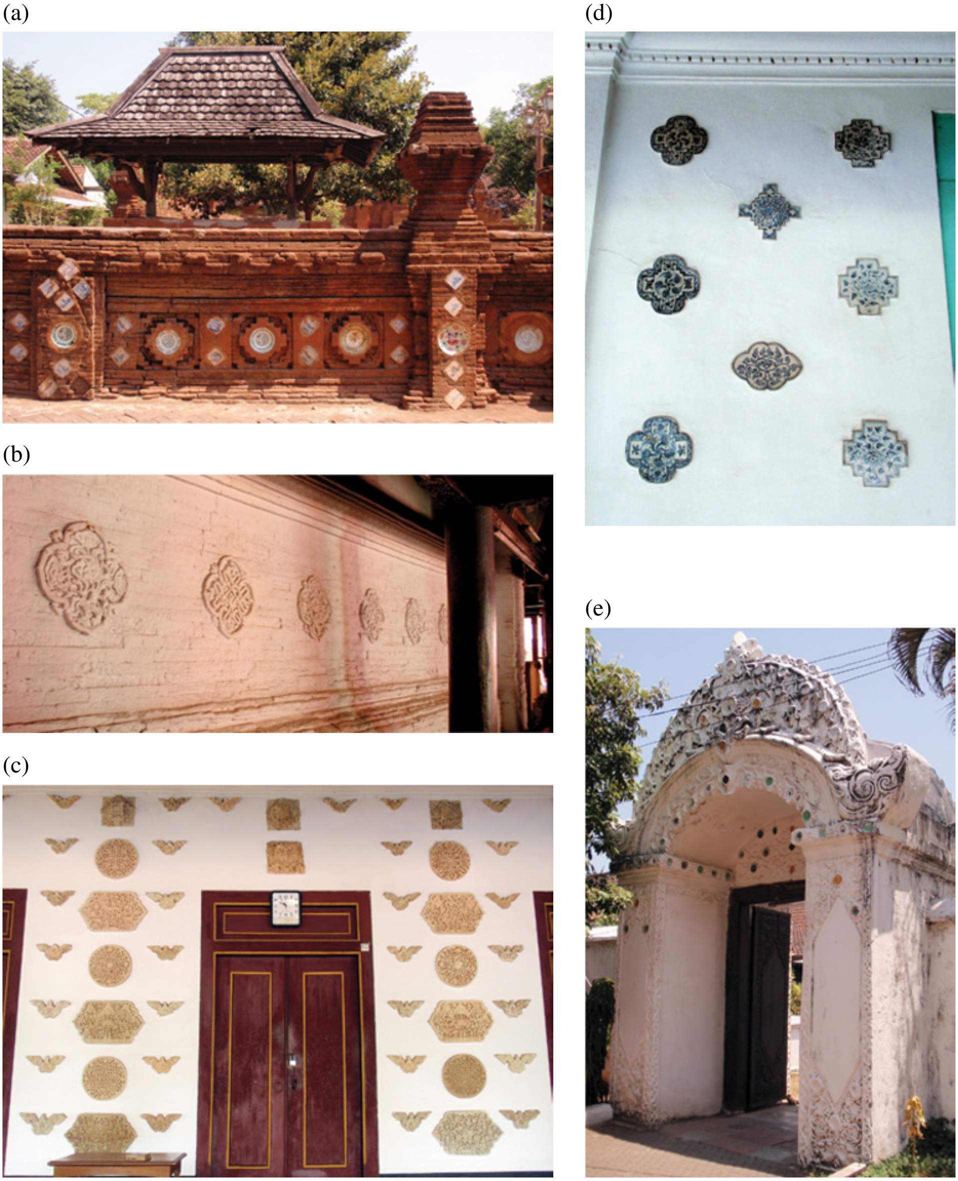


Figure 38.6 Ornament. (a) Ornamental brick patterns and ceramic plate inserts, Siti Hinggil compound wall, Kraton Kasepuhan, Cirebon, West Java. (b) Terracotta medallions on the brick wall of Sang Cipta Rasa royal mosque of Kraton Kasepuhan, Cirebon, West Java. (c) Stone medallions of Mantingan mosque, near Jepara, Central Java. (d) Blue-and-white custom-made Vietnamese wall tiles at Demak, Central Java. (e) Ceramic plates in plasterwork decorative schema, Kraton Kasepuhan gateway, Cirebon, West Java.

the eastern archipelago. The mosque of Palopo (1603) in Luwu, South Sulawesi, presents an interesting confluence of Javanese construction and a structural format associated with the architecture of Minangkabau in the highlands of Sumatra. The area's Islamization is attributed to Minangkabau proselytizers (Pelras 1994), and the mosque's top roof tier is supported by a single central pillar (made from the local *cinnagori* hardwood) characteristic of Minangkabau mosques. The walls, meanwhile, are of fitted stone in the manner of Javanese *candi* construction, with Greek cross-shaped ventilation openings in the qibla wall after similar openings created on Javanese brick wall designs by the omission of brick courses – in Palopo the same effect is imitated by incising the stone.

The mid-sixteenth-century mosque in Buton is built with a hip roof, with the ridge in the direction of the qibla axis. Islamization of the area is attributed to a proselytizer from Patani. This might explain why the Buton mosque follows the plan, though not the exact roof form, of an overlooked tradition – that of Patani mosques, as seen in the seventeenth-century Teluk Manok and the smaller Surau Aur. These rectangular halls are typologically related to the Buddhist monastery hall (*vihara*), which would have been a feature of the earlier Buddhist Malay polities (Bougas 1986, 1992; M. Zamberi 2001). Some Bangkok mosques built by Malay and Javanese communities,[20] as well as some Cham mosques (built by the people of Champa, present-day central Vietnam), are built in forms and decorative motifs that are more overtly reminiscent of contemporary Buddhist halls of Cambodia and Thailand.

Islam as "Overlay": Discursive Re-signification Beyond Mosques

One oft-quoted basis for synthesis in Southeast Asian Islam comes from metaphysical speculation and theological debates in orthodox Sufism. A prominent role is accorded in texts and popular tradition to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Wali Songo proselytizers, Muslim saints who converted the populace, particularly in negotiating the position of the pre-Islamic arts and *adat* – an Arabic loanword to denote pre-Islamic norms, practices, and customary laws. Orthodox Sufi orders in the sixteenth-century Islamic intellectual centers of northern Sumatra and Pesisir Java produced mystical texts and Javanese "Suluk" literature that contained both pantheistic and monistic elements (Riddell 2001; Zoetmulder 1995), while both Islamic orthodoxy and orthodox Sufi mysticism variously attempted to discredit, contest, or incorporate existing meditative and ascetic practices of Shaivite and Buddhist mendicants and ascetics (Braginsky 2004; Ricklefs 2006; Riddell 2001).

A Persian-influenced notion of Islamic kingship that arose around the twelfth century, encapsulated in the expression "Shadow of God on Earth" and linked to ʿAbd al-Karim al-Jili's notion of the "Perfect Man" (*al-insan al-kamil*) (Milner 1983), represented a particularly productive "special overlay" of spiritual doctrines.

These doctrines provided space for Southeast Asian Indic and autochthonous expression within Muslim kingship and imperial culture. Southeast Asian Muslim rulers, whether of thalassocracies or theocracies, could thus set themselves up as the locus for mystical potency and spiritual exemplars and intermediaries in religious piety through the design of royal pleasure gardens and palace complexes whose idealized depictions of cosmic order were previously linked to Hindu-Buddhist notions of, for example, the Javanese ruler as "Siwa-Buddha" or the Hindu god Indra, or to indigenized Indic ideas of the ruler as a deified ancestor upon his death. This is most strikingly seen in the Perso-Islamic terms and allusions employed in Aceh's Taman Ghairah, which will be discussed later.

Islamic symbolic references have also been articulated in purely local terms, challenging Grabar's notion of Islam as a "special overlay." Perhaps the clearest example comes from the consolidation of three calendars by Sultan Agung of Mataram, Central Java, in 1633 – namely the Indic Śaka calendar, the indigenous *pasaran* five-day cycle, and the Hijri calendar – to form what is now known as Anno Javanico (Taun Jawa). Javanese Muslim graves, buildings, and manuscripts were almost invariably dated using this system. Merle Ricklefs (2006) cites this remarkable consolidation as an example of a distinctly Javanese Mataram Islamic "mystic synthesis," since it allowed the continued observance of pre-Islamic auspicious days alongside adherence to Islamic ritual cycles. In fact, syncretism of Islamic and local ideas and concepts also existed long before Sultan Agung's initiative and in ways that were deeply rooted in autochthonous cultures that existed away from imperial centers (Brakel 2004; Johns 1981; Jones 1979).

Taman – Gardens as Microcosmos

The *taman*, intended as both pleasure garden and as a symbol of cosmic order and harmony for spiritual retreat, is an especially interesting subject for the study of the reworking of pre-Islamic symbolism and spiritual practices. In the *taman*, elaborate artificial landscapes of pools, water channels, and waterworks intended both for aesthetic enjoyment and for irrigation are complemented by architectural structures representing a mountain, to create settings that act as aids (*yantra*) to meditation (*samadhi*).

Denys Lombard's (2010) study on the symbolism of the *taman* and its links to pre-Islamic imagery of the garden in tenth-century Javanese literature and narrative reliefs discusses two eighteenth-century Javanese *taman*s, namely Sunyaragi near Cirebon, and Taman Sari in Yogyakarta. For Lombard (2010: 62), these common themes indicate that "there existed in Java … a consummate art of the garden," and also that "the Javanese have had their own interpretation of the garden." However, Lombard's survey omits two older sixteenth-century Javanese examples from Banten and Cirebon, and a third, seventeenth-century *taman* from Aceh, in northern Sumatra. These earlier examples also share the same basic forms and themes, suggesting that the distinct form of the garden that Lombard observes for Java also extended beyond the two Javanese examples used as the basis for his observation. More significantly, they were found in the context of the palace and/or pleasure gardens of the sultans of Aceh, Banten, and Cirebon and exhibited the Islamic overlay of signification that Lombard did not have occasion to refer to.

One characteristic motif of the *taman* is the floating pavilion (*balé kambang*) – a building set on a raised mound representing a mountain set amidst an artificial lake or pools representing the sea. Thus, the name of the *taman* in Banten, Tasekardi, combines the Javanese term for lake and the Arabic for the earth, referring to the two primal elements of sea and mountain represented by a large rectangular brick pool of about five hectares, and an artificial island set in the middle, containing the ruins of a pier and a two-story stone structure. The pool irrigated the surrounding fields and its water was also channeled via a 6 km-long canal through three purifying chambers to the palace in Banten town where it is fed into the bathing pool Rara Denok and to various water spouts and fountains (Behrend 1984). Banten was founded in the early sixteenth century by one of the Wali Songo, Sharif Hidayatullah (Sunan Gunung Jati), a proselytizer of Arab descent who had arrived from Pasai (Azra 2006: 53). The subsequent rulers of Banten, who were his descendants and who built these structures, styled themselves Maulana and, later on, Sultan.

Before founding Banten, Sharif Hidayatullah had also established a Muslim dynasty in Cirebon in the fifteenth century. The ruins of his predecessor's palace, the Dalem Agung Pakungwati, contains a series of brick-walled courts with pavilions and several pools. The adjacent palace complex built by his descendants, Kraton Kasepuhan, contains a *taman* comprising a series of pools and structures which has escaped existing surveys by Behrend (1984) and Lombard (2010). A mound named Gunung Indrakila (Indra's Mountain Abode) is found adjacent to a channel called Batang Tirtasata that links two pools; the larger pool, called Kolam Langensari (Pool of Glorious Pleasure), contains a *balé kambang*.[21]

Taman Ghairah, the royal gardens of Aceh, is described in detail in an Acehnese Malay court text, the *Bustan al-Salatin* (Garden of Kings). While the form of the *taman* belongs to Javanese tradition, Persian and Arabian symbolic names jostle with those derived from indigenous, Javanese, and Indic sources. Said to be laid out during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Thani (r. 1636–1675), it contains a diverted river Dar al-Ishqi (the Kruëng Daroy today), a mosque called Ishqi Mushahadah (The Passion of the Declaration of Faith), and a square named Medan Khairani (Square of Virtuousness). In the middle of the latter stood a "tower as a place for sitting in state (*menara tempat semayam*)" called Gegunungan Menara Permata (Mountain of the Jeweled Tower) – this is today known as Gunongan, and only the octagonal 9.5 m high brick structure with the form of a tiered flower-like composition remains, while the columns of copper, silver roof tiles resembling a sago-palm roof, and a pinnacle of pinchback have vanished. There are also artificial pools with man-made islands, and serpent (*naga*) spouts and bathing places (Lombard 2006: 274–278). In Wessing's detailed reading, the Gunongan can be related to both Javanese Indic notions of the cosmos and, very obliquely, to Perso-Islamic Mughal paradisiacal gardens (1988: 172).

The cosmic symbolism of mountain and sea seen in the *taman*, represented by pavilions on elevated mounds and surrounding pools, also figures in the mosque complexes. The mosque halls of Cirebon Kasepuhan, Banten, Jepara, Kota Gede, and Yogyakarta (Figure 38.3a and Figure 38.4) are surrounded either on one or three sides by a channel or moat and provided with one or more bridges to the prayer hall. The mosque halls can thus be read as an element representing mountains within a landscape charged with cosmic symbolism, particularly when they lie within elaborate complexes with pools and burial grounds of kings or the venerated saints (Wali Songo) of Java.

Courtyard Morphology and Gateways

The story of how different Wali Songo (the symbolically named "Nine Saints" of Java) proselytizers were responsible for the preparation and erection of Demak Mosque's four principal columns is an oft-repeated one in connection with the *tajug* mosque myth of Demak-as-precedent. However, columns, gateways, and other architectural elements were also imbued with Islamic references in more explicit ways. The various pillar configurations in the pavilions of the Siti Hinggil courtyard of Kasepuhan palace in Cirebon are given parallel Javanese-Sanskrit and Arabic names by which they can be read to either signify Indic or Islamic meanings (Imran 2013).

Kasepuhan contains a hierarchy of layered spaces marked in each instance by a mosque. Thus its royal mosque stands to the west of the city's square (*alun-alun*) fronting the palace's northern (front) entrance; a medium-sized private mosque stands in front of a smaller square in its semi-private courtyard for state and judiciary functions, and the Small Prayer Hall (Langgar Alit) is found in the private domain of the complex (see Figure 38.4a). These layers are replicated in Kanoman to a lesser degree.

Walled courtyards with gateways were also a feature of sixteenth-century palaces in Aceh and Banten. In fact whole cities were built in this morphological pattern. A Surabaya map of 1678 depicts with remarkable accuracy the surviving courtyards of the fifteenth-century Ampel complex in Surabaya, and indicates that courtyards once characterized the whole city, of which none survive today. Small by Javanese standards but among the oldest Muslim satellite centers inserted into an existing Majapahit-era port-city, the Ampel complex thus emerges as a precious remnant of a historic morphological feature. According to tradition, the five gates of the Ampel courtyards represent the five pillars of Islam, and are assigned their respective associations according to their position within the complex.[22] The saint (Wali Songo) who founded the settlement, Raden Rahmat (Sunan Ampel), was from Pasai. He is said to have established Ampel-Gading as a satellite Muslim center near Surabaya with the consent of the Majapahit ruler. The same situation is found in later, more elaborate Javanese Islamic complexes that are terraced into hill slopes – they were established as satellite religious and educational establishments near existing towns or cities.

The Ampel complex and the Kasepuhan and Kanoman palaces are fifteenth-century examples of the *panataran* (courtyard) complexes that are laid out on level ground, as are later, more elaborate sixteenth- and seventeenth-century mosque-and-tomb complexes at Bonang, Kadilangu, Kudus, Mantingan, and Kotagede. On the other hand, *pundhen*-type (terraced hill slope) mosque-and-tomb complexes are exemplified by the following sixteenth-century examples: the 10 terraces of Cirebon's Gunung Jati complex at Gunung Sembung, the Sendang Duwur complex near Lamongan,[23] the seven terraces on the Giri Kedhaton site, and the terraced approaches to the Giri complex near Gresik, as well as the elaborate seventeenth-century royal mausoleum complex at Imogiri.

Arabic names were also used to invoke connections to the Islamic heartlands in the dramatic exposition of Majapahit architecture seen in the Kudus (al-Quds) mosque-and-tomb complex on the north coast of Central Java (Figure 38.7). An Arabic inscription from 1549, dated in the Hegira, names the mosque "al-Aqsa, [built] in al-Quds" (i.e., Jerusalem) by the fifth Imam of the Demak Mosque, recorded as al-Qadi Jaʿfar al-Sadiq, a namesake of the fifth (according to the

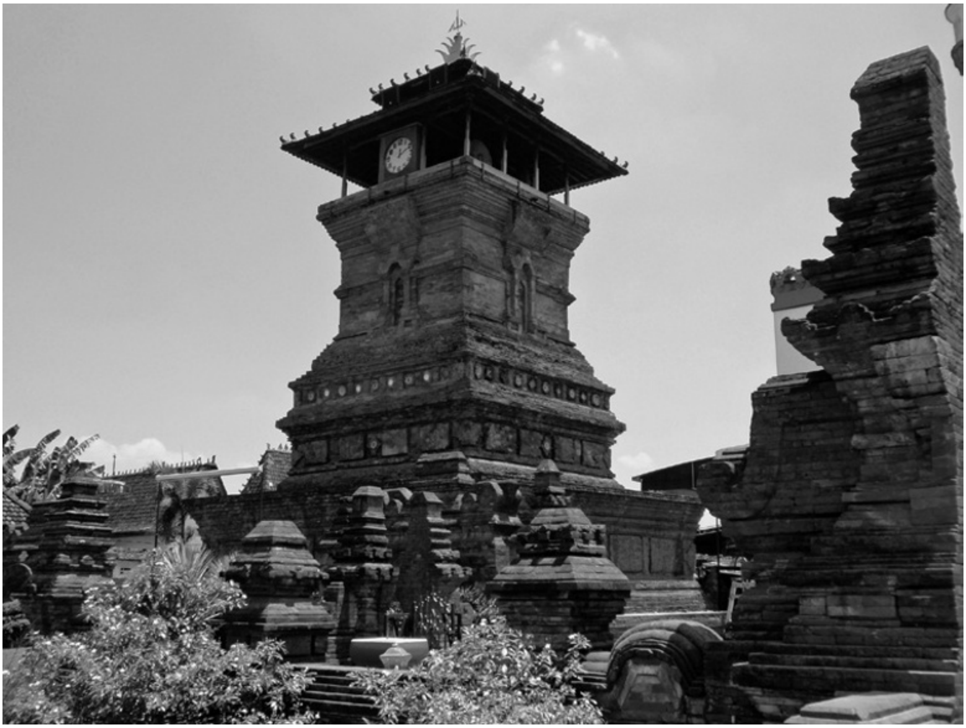


FIGURE 38.7 Kudus minaret and several old brick gateways to the complex, Central Java.

Ismaʿili) Shiʿi imam (Kalus and Guillot 2008). Its unique red-brick minaret, assuming the profile of east Javanese *candi*, or more accurately the signal-drum tower of Javanese (and Balinese) temple complexes, has assured Kudus a place in popular memory. A nearby example at Mount Muria (al-Marwah or Moriah) which has escaped proper architectural or historical discussion is the burial complex and madrasa (*pesantren*) of another proselytizer, Raden ʿUmar Said alias Sunan Muria.

Temporal Paradox and Political Posturing

The preceding discussion has reviewed the need to go beyond a monolithic view of Southeast Asia's traditions of Islamic architecture (even while it is viewed as a regional unit) by demonstrating, through a number of examples, the inadequacy of existing methodological and taxonomic frameworks and the role of a rigorous typological framework in revealing the significance of subregional model variations. Further, pre-Islamic traditions enjoyed continuity and even further elaboration through their adaptation to new purposes. In particular, their re-signification through the overlay of Islamic or Islamized meaning suggests a certain trajectory – but a word of caution must here be inserted against any teleological assumption. For while Sufi mysticism and Perso-Islamic kingship furnished concepts that legitimized pre-Islamic motifs and forms through their re-signification and associative resonance in the new religious milieu, such "overlays" (after Grabar) in fact enabled pre-Islamic elements to be reworked in ways that surpass their original pre-Islamic usage. Contra Grabar, such syntheses may be motivated by factors other than adaptation to the tenets of the newly adopted faith. They were also driven by a desire to integrate pre-Islamic expressions of spiritual potency – both autochthonous and Indic – and to highlight the Muslim polity's inheritance of the mantle of prestigious pre-Islamic imperial centers, particularly that of Majapahit.[24]

Further, as Southeast Asian Muslim polities became more powerful and entrenched, there was a marked enunciation and elaboration of pre-Islamic ideas and forms. In what may be termed a temporal paradox, craftsmen in the service of seventeenth-century Muslim patrons elaborated pre-Islamic forms and ornamental vocabulary more than a century after the demise of Majapahit and other pre-Islamic polities, whereas the earliest Muslim polities that coexisted with Majapahit have left behind far simpler forms. This process was heightened even further in the eighteenth century, which lies beyond this chapter's scope.

These developments run counter to the assumption of a linear trajectory from an "early" phase to a "transitional" phase leading to a fully-fledged Islamic art, with a corresponding decrease in the contribution of indigenous and Indic expressive vocabulary. Instead, Nusantara's Muslim polities adopted what may be called "political posturing" by emphasizing continuities with pre-Islamic imperial culture even as they articulated connections to a new religious framework.

Perhaps the most striking examples of posturing is seen in how zoomorphic figures feature prominently as the royal mounts of some Muslim rulers. Their use may indicate an appeal to the image of Indic deity mounts and indigenous mythology of the sea serpent (*naga*) or other creatures. Among the oldest specimens is a magnificent sixteenth-century boat inscribed with the name "Sultan Abdul Malik, Tuban" (a port in north coast Java) preserved as fragments on Selayar island, south Sulawesi, featuring an elaborate *naga* head 110 cm high with ornate wings and a 1.5 m long tail (Reid 1990a: 99). In Cirebon, two old royal carriages assume the fantastic shapes of hybrid animals: the late sixteenth-century Singhabarwang from Kasepuhan and the Paksinagaliman from Kanoman, inscribed with the date 1530 AJ or 1608 on its neck. A local zoomorphic calligraphic version of the lion of ʿAli (Macan ʿAli) serves as the royal emblem and appears on the flag of Cirebon accompanied by his sword Dhu'l-Fiqar. Large Garuda and Jetayu bird-form mounts, respectively Vishnu's mount and a warrior in the Ramayana, were still being used for wedding or circumcision processions for the royal princes of the Sultanates of Patani, Kelantan, and Terengganu in the northeastern Malayan Peninsula in the early twentieth century (Sheppard 1972).

Conclusion

The posturing and the negotiation between local, pre-Islamic, and Islamic traditions seen in the royal mounts can be discussed more satisfactorily through a cultural and historical perspective on the regional polities between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries.[25] The same is true of the broader architectural traditions discussed in this chapter. The responses in Islamic art and architectural production to the legacy of earlier, formative polities and to the opportunities presented by their demise, the perceived relationship between Islamic and pre-Islamic political cultures, and the posturing adopted by alternative or rival centers, found expression through the development of art and architecture. A historiography of Southeast Asian Islamic architecture before the seventeenth century would ideally be built upon the analysis of physical innovations against the underlying textual bases of re-signification and negotiation of (sometimes conflicting) systems of meaning and symbolism, as well as a detailed and critical analysis of the historical background of political and socioeconomic changes and their broader contexts. However, the prospect for a synthetic and comprehensive survey is still hampered by the near absence of detailed catalogues of objects and buildings and analyses of extant texts from the period.

Notes

1 Selat, Malay for "Straits," is rendered Salahit in Arab and Persian texts, while the name "Sea of Malayu" appears in Kurdhadhbih's Persian account. See Andaya 2008.

2 The best treatment of this topic is Laffan 2009.

3 Laffan 2009.

4 Rawson 1967: 203 and Fergusson 1962. Rawson states forthright that "although the modes [of Hindu-Buddhist or Indic art in Southeast Asia] may be Indian the expression and content are local" (1962: 7).

5 See Bussagli 1989; Frederic 1965; Munsterberg 1970; and Rawson 1967.

6 See Blair and Bloom 1994 and Tadgell 2008.

7 According to Geertz (1968: 11), "Islam did not construct a civilization, it appropriated one," while Lapidus (2002: 216) claims, "Indonesian and Malayan regimes perpetuated a non-Islamic culture of imperium with little more than Islamic titles." Flood (2007) and (2009) has also noted the dismissive stance towards hybrid forms that continued pre-Islamic motifs in the South Asian and West Asian contexts.

8 See Bruinessen 1994 on the Kubrawiyya link of Jawi students, and Riddell 2001 on Hamzah Fansuri's link to the Qadiriyya and Shams aʾ-Din al-Sumatrani's link to the Naqshbandiyya.

9 A fourteenth-century text from Aden mentions a certain Mascud al-Jawi, who was inducted into the Qadiriyya order there and was particularly esteemed for his capacity for mystical communication via *dhikr* (remembrance) (Laffan 2011: 4–5).

10 The two rulers of Pasai adopted the regnal names al-Sultan al-Malik al-Saleh (Merah Silau, d. 1297) and Malik al-Zahir (d. 1326), as indicated on their tombstones – see Zakaria Ali 1994: 223. These names correspond to Al-Malik as-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub (1205–1249), Ayyubid ruler of Egypt from 1240 to 1249; and Al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari (1223–1277, r. 1260–1277), fifth Mamluk ruler of the Egyptian Bahri line of the Mamluk dynasty.

11 Ibn Battuta, who visited Pasai in 1346, noted that the court hosted Persian scholars from Delhi and took an active interest in scholarly discussions with Sufi theologians (Hall 1977: 226).

12 The Bantenese sent a dispatch to Mecca in 1630 which returned in 1638, to obtain an explanation for three religious tracts, and confer title of Sultan upon the ruler (Laffan 2011: 17). Aceh cultivated commercial and diplomatic ties with the Ottomans in the 1530s and 1560s.

13 A manuscript kept in the Museum of Cape Malays in Cape Town and attributed to Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari, has interlinear text in Bugis Lontaraʾ or Sulapak Eppa script accompanying the Arabic text; a letter from the Sultan Ternate dated 1521 (Ab Razak Ab Karim (1994)) and two seventeenth-century Banten letters to the king of Denmark (Voorhoeve 1975) have also survived.

14 See Damais 1968; Lambourn 2003, 2004; Montana 1997; and Othman 1988.

15 For a useful summary of these earlier views and speculations, see Budi 2004.

16 Lico 2008 includes an old photograph of the mosque before the construction of the present concrete hall around these columns (p. 75).

17 The four projecting gables identify mosques built by the hierarchical Koto Piliang clan confederation (*lareh*) of the Minangkabau, as opposed to the egalitarian Bodi Caniago confederation. For a detailed typological discussion see Sudibyo (1987).

18 See Atmodjo 1999: 90 for Banua Lawas Mosque near Banjarmasin, and Hidayat and Widodo 2005: 126 for Sultan Suriansyah Mosque, Banjarmasin. Both are reputedly built by Khatib Dayan from "Demak," though this reference is anachronistic.

19 As recorded by the Spanish Alonso Beltran. See Nicholl 2002: 47–51.

20 See Sudwilai 2001 for images of Bangkok mosques.

21 These names are indicated in a manuscript supplied by Kraton Kasepuhan in the author's collection.

22 This popular tradition is well known locally and has been commented upon in several local news articles, but it has not received any academic study.

23 On this remarkable complex, see the monography by Uka Tjandrasasmita (1975b).

24 The chronicles of the region's Muslim polities reflect such concerns, especially Babad Demak, Sejarah Banten, Babad Cirebon, and Babad Tanah Jawi.

25 These developments include the Portuguese conquest of Melaka in 1511 and Pasai in 1520; Majapahit's demise following an attack on its capital in 1527, traditionally said to have been by a combined force of Pesisir Javanese Muslim port-polities led by Demak; and finally the disintegration of Demak itself following the death of its third sultan Trenggana in 1546. Also relevant is the notion of a seventeenth-century crisis for maritime Southeast Asian polities and trade posited by Anthony Reid (1990b). See also Robson 1981 and Graaf and Pigeaud 2003.

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39

Mudejar Americano: Iberian Aesthetic Transmission in the New World

Thomas B.F. Cummins and
María Judith Feliciano

Why a chapter about the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century New World in a volume dedicated to Islamic art? After all, Islamic art is not created, built, or made in the New World. There are, however, forms and iconographies that conjure the idea of an Islamic artistic presence in the American viceroyalties. But these identifications are the projection of modern scholars who see Islamic traces, survivals, or direct influences in the art and architecture of Spanish America. Of course, Islam and Islamic forms were a constant reference for various measures of how Christian Spaniards in the New World understood and characterized what they saw. The continuing threat of Islam to Christian Europe also was an ongoing concern in the art and politics of the Spanish viceroyalties in the Americas.

In this chapter, we trace some of these references in terms of their resonance in New World iconography, performance, and cultural politics. It is important to emphasize that the New World was closed off to Islamic presence by strict prohibitions of migration, even to converts ("new Christians"). Some crypto-Jews and -Muslims did manage to come to America, but they remained undetected as much as possible. When exposed, they were subjected to trial by the Inquisition. From inquisitorial accounts, there were very few trials against converted Muslims (*moriscos*) (Alberro 1998; Feliciano 2004). Nonetheless, individuals were accused throughout the Americas of being New Christians and were subjected to proof of their "purity of blood" (*pureza de sangre*; Martínez 2011). The mention of the

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Inquisition, New Christians, and crypto-Muslims in the New World is important to a chapter on Islamic art in the Americas because there is an underlying suspicion that the forms and techniques that harken to the Islamic tradition were somehow grafted onto the art of the viceroyalties by these crypto-Muslims (cf. Kauffmann 2003). By such reasoning, one might suppose that the many French who lived in or visited the Americas were responsible for the Gothic features in the cathedrals of Santo Domingo, Mexico City, Lima, Bogotá, or Cuzco because the style originated in France. This is absurd for many reasons, including the fact that German and French art historians at the beginning of the twentieth century spilled much ink regarding the national origins of the Gothic. But this analogy exemplifies why it is essential not to conflate artistic forms, ethnicity, and contemporary notions of nation-states, which happens when scholars see such "Islamic" forms in the Americas.

Thus, we shall examine the term "mudejar" – an artistic term that derives from the Arabic *mudajjan*, a legal designation used during the medieval period to refer to Muslims who remained in Iberia after the Christian conquest – and its application to forms, most notably wooden ceilings, in the Americas. What does it mean to call them mudejar? Does the term qualify the forms as being Islamic art, either as a direct transplant or survival? How do local and imperial mentalities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries inform the artistic choices that we now label mudejar? These questions speak directly to one of the thorny problems concerning colonial art: is it simply derivative or is it generative? We will not address this larger issue, but it lurks behind the specific discussions of "Islamic art" that we present below.

The concept of an American mudejar derives from three powerful historiographic trends from which objects and ideas have been difficult to disentangle. First, that of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spanish academic establishment, which immediately adopted the idea of mudejar art as a style born out of the success of the Christian conquest – of subjugated Muslims working for Christian patrons (Amador de los Ríos 1872). While the discourse has changed to acknowledge the participation of all segments of society in the process of artistic creation, it is still dependent on religious labels to describe components that, in fact, become something else in the Americas, where they are not necessarily Islamic or ethnic indices for the viewer or maker. They are instead a "naturalized" element of a colonial society in which the relevant forms are entirely divorced from whatever origin modern scholars assume for their referential system. The problem then is that visual elements now so easily read as markers of Islam when appearing in a distant continent, the Americas, are seen as manifesting a kind of unending chain of purity (mudejar) that transcends historical conditions of geography, production, and reception.

Second, the idea of mudejar art was originally understood as a mirror of the Spanish national character and became quickly adopted as the quintessential Spanish "national style," one that lasted, like the essence of the Iberian self, unchanged for centuries (Feliciano 2014). Transmitted to the Americas during the first half of the twentieth century, this style was acknowledged as the synthesis of the Iberian legacy in the New World. In Manuel Toussaint's words, for instance, "Among the marvelous cultural treasures that Spain so generously distributed in the New World … is mudejar art … the most evident expression of Spain before the Renaissance, which fused with the Renaissance movement itself and endured many years throughout the colonies" (Toussaint 1946: 3).

The formulation of the mudejar discourse coincided with the foundation of art history as a discipline in both Spain and the Americas. As a result, the concept is connected directly to the hallowed legacies of influential figures on both shores of the Atlantic. Third and finally, there is the historical coincidence of 1492: the Fall of Granada and the Discovery of the Americas. These two Spanish achievements were intimately linked at a variety of levels in the sixteenth century and continue to be seen as interrelated in real and imagined ways until today. Consequently, the American mudejar has emerged as a stable category of analysis (Feliciano and Rouhi 2006: 317–328). Its existence, relevance, and longevity have been fully assimilated into the greater discourse of viceregal art and architecture.

The publication of Manuel Toussaint's pioneering work *El arte mudéjar en América* (1946) gave rise to a feverish publication effort on the subject throughout the Americas. Toussaint's perspective was shaded by an Orientalist perception that understood mudejarismo to be essentially an Islamic derivation and, ultimately, a foreign addition to the Iberian visual repertoire on both shores of the Atlantic. His pioneering work focused on the survey and stylistic analysis of wooden ceilings (*artesonado*s). Because *artesonado*s survive in consistent, though not in considerable, numbers across the Spanish Americas, their study developed steadily during the second half of the twentieth century. Almost 50 years later, a number of publications produced in 1992 pertaining to the histories and significance of the "discovery" of the New World and the conquest of the kingdom of Granada in 1492 included an important resurgence of the study of mudejarismo in the viceroyalties. In this new phase, *artesonado*s still remained the most emblematic case study of the American mudejar (Borrás Gualis 1995; Henares Cuéllar 1995; López Guzmán *et al.* 1992). The decades since then also have witnessed an increasing interest in the study of the mudejar aesthetic phenomenon, but its scholarship remains closely tied to the description and identification of wooden ceilings, carpentry techniques, and their sources of inspiration (Henares Cuéllar and López Guzmán 1993; López Guzmán 2000). Indeed, in the Spanish colonial context, the term "mudejar" immediately, and almost exclusively, conjures ornate wooden ceilings and sometimes their closest relative, decorative carpentry inlay (*taracea*). Because wooden ceilings present an ostensibly "direct" visual connection to the arts of al-Andalus (or rather, their ornamentation can be traced easily, though not accurately, to an Andalusi past), their analysis remains wedged in their formal attributes.

Recent studies have shed light on the processes of selection of so-called mudejar forms and media in the Iberian and viceregal worlds. The much-needed turn away from an object-centered formalist approach into contextual methodologies that make use of cross-disciplinary tools has transformed the mudejar discourse in the Americas. From the expansion of the question into the luxury arts, devotional life, liturgical practices, and royal patronage, among others, the efforts are now centered on the interpretation of forms rather than simply the analysis of forms in themselves (Díaz Cayeros 2013; Robinson 2011; Ruiz Souza and Feliciano 2017).

In this investigation, we argue for a different approach to the study of the so-called American mudejar phenomenon. We posit that at the time of the American conquest and colonization in the late fifteenth century, mudejar forms and objects were laden with Iberian cultural meanings and, thus, were efficient and transferable carriers of unambiguously Iberian cultural information. Any lingering association with the arts of Islam disappeared in the new American environments, where the processes of reception of European visual forms by Amerindians, Africans, and American-born descendants of Spanish settlers, among others, undoubtedly changed the nature of art making and consumption, to say nothing of the symbolic appropriation of forms. We continue to steer attention towards meaning by questioning the foundational nineteenth-century gaze and value judgments in relation to the complexity of the viceregal lived environment in which so-called mudejar forms were deployed.

At the same time, we understand that familiarity with Islamic forms, sometimes labeled *morisco* (a term used to designate converted Muslims but commonly used as an adjective to modify things that appeared to belong within this cultural group) in Spain were projected onto what Spaniards encountered in the Americas. At times it was simply a means to name things that were categorically similar, such as the Aztec and Inca religious buildings. They were not called churches (*iglesias*) but temples (*templos*), and often the term "cue" or "cu" was used instead. "Cue" is another shorter term for "mesquita" or mosque (*mezquita* in modern Spanish). For example, Bernal Diaz (d. 1584), soldier in the Conquest of Tenochtitlan, companion of Hernán Cortés, and early chronicler of New Spain, calls the great temples of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco "cues" and about the latter he says,

> after we took that great and strong city and the sites were apportioned, it was then decided that in the place of that great Cue we should build a church to our patron and guide Saint James, and a great part of the site of the great temple of Huichilobos was occupied by the site of the holy church. (Diaz del Castillo 2008: 180)

Here, the superimposition of the cult of Santiago over the Aztec devotion to their titular deity Huitzilopochtli has a parallel in many parts of Spain where it was installed in converted mosques, such as the nave of the cathedral begun by Charles V in 1523 inside the emblematic Great Mosque of Córdoba. As we shall see below, this transposition becomes very significant in cult and artistic practices in the American viceroyalties.

On other occasions the analogies were quite specific. For example, when Martín de Murúa (d. 1618), a Basque Mercedarian friar who chronicled the early colonial experience in Peru, tried to explain to his reader what the *tocapu*, an Inca textile motif formed by discrete, geometrical, abstract units and commonly found on male tunics looked like, he wrote,

> The dress that was normally used was a shirt fashioned from a fine tapestry weave cloth, which was made by the Inca princesses, who spun it in the most fine manner, to weave the garments of the Inca, and they sculpted in it marvelous works of *tocapu*, which they say means a variety of brocades, with a thousand hues of a subtle fashion, in the style of *almaisales moriscos*, of an excellent delicacy and sometimes purple, or blue, or green, or a most fine crimson. (Murúa 1616: book 2, chapter 2, folio 226v)

The analogy made to *tocapu* by the phrase *almaisales moriscos* (Moorish almaisales) used to describe it is ambiguous, though it likely refers to its geometric decoration. The Arabic-derived word *almaizar*, which originally designated a gauzy prayer veil heavily decorated along the edges, was still used in the seventeenth century to refer to a liturgical garment known officially as the "humeral veil." *Almaisales moriscos* and *toccapuccompincuna*, objects and images that stemmed from vastly different cultural contexts, had nothing in common other than being textiles but were drawn into a comparison by the experience of a Spanish friar in Peru and his need to communicate through analogy how an Andean "something" looked to his Iberian readers who would likely never see it.

In an almost inverse way, this is how the wooden ceilings known as *artesonado*s in the New World have been seen and understood by modern viewers. For example, the Church of San Francisco in Tlaxcala (central Mexico, begun 1530s) (Figure 39.1) houses two of the most renowned *artesonado*s of the viceregal world. In the influential early survey (1945) of Mexican colonial architecture *Historia del arte hispanoamericano*, Diego Angulo described San Francisco's wooden ceilings as "the richest" in Mexico. This sentiment has been shared by the vast majority of architectural historians of the colonial period, who concur that San Francisco is the "most notable surviving example" of mudejar carpentry in New Spain (Angulo Iñiguez and Dorta 1945: 311). Toussaint deemed it the oldest and most important in the viceroyalty, dating it to the last decades of the sixteenth century. Most recently, it was described as a "perfect mudejar structure" (Gutiérrez Arriola 1997: 28). Using the term "mudejar" to name something created in the Americas equates it categorically and epistemologically to what is created in Spain and thereby collapses the understanding of these ceilings into a unified but ultimately historically amorphous field of understanding and experience.

Yet, the construction and ornamentation histories of the Franciscan church at Tlaxcala, starting at the onset of the colonial process and lasting well into the late seventeenth century, follow a series of rebuilding phases that complicate the study of its celebrated ceilings and how they were seen and experienced. In fact, these

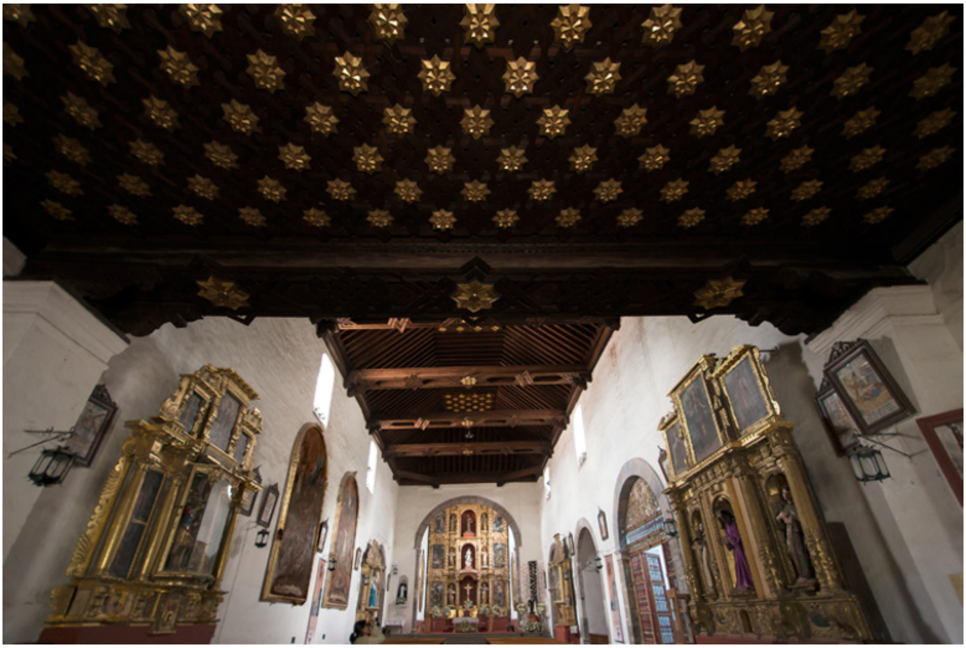

Figure 39.1 *Artesonado* at the Church of San Francisco in Tlaxcala, Mexico. Source: Eumelia Hernández. Reproduced with permission.

ceilings remain one of the great unsolved mysteries of the church's construction. The protracted construction history of the church illustrates the complexity of the study of so-called mudejar architectural units of the viceregal periods. The ceilings at Tlaxcala may well have been first constructed in the late sixteenth century. But they also may have been remodeled, transformed, or incorporated anew during the late seventeenth century. Even less is understood about the social stimuli that prompted their selection in the first place because the dominant art historical discourse has isolated the "mudejar" features from the rest of the structural and decorative components of the church. Ceilings of remarkable quality and aesthetic value, such as the *artesonado*s at Tlaxcala, have become prisoners of their splendor, removed from the mainstream of colonial architectural vocabularies, their discourse locked within the churches' doors.

The Franciscan church in Tlaxcala was not only built several times but changed location twice (Gutiérrez Arriola 1997: 5–36). The first monastery, finished and dedicated in the town of San Francisco Cuitlixco after 1527, followed the initial use of a space on the site of the defeated Mexicatzin's palace (one of the four lords of Tlaxcala at the time of the conquest). In 1530, the city of Tlaxcala was resettled in a new strategic location and, consequently, so was the Franciscan convent and church. Construction was swift during the following decade with the addition of a vaulted space, which was already in place by 1539, along with two atria

(Gibson 1967: 44; Gutiérrez Arriola 1997: 12–13). Liturgical implements and decoration were added during the 1550s and 1560s, when a series of altarpieces and an organ were ordered. Finally, the year 1564 saw the construction of the Capilla Mayor (Main Chapel). By 1646, however, the church appears to have been in disrepair. In that year, the native population requested permission to maintain the burial chapel of their nobility, which was built by their ancestors during the church's early history (Nettel 1993: 44).

Writing in 1697, Fray Agustín de Vetancourt recorded the evolution of the Church of San Francisco until it was vacated for renovation in the year 1640 (Chauvet 1950: 26–27; de Vetancourt 1971: 53). Most relevant to this investigation is the fact that Vetancourt described the church as "*de tijera*" (assembled), a direct reference to its wooden ceiling. It is difficult, however, to establish if the Church of San Francisco was covered with a wooden ceiling from its earliest stages, if the extant *artesonado* is an original part of the earliest structure, or if it was added in the seventeenth century. The chronicler mentions a patron named Don Diego de Tapia, "who recovered the Church," suggesting that he may have replaced an already existing ceiling or simply repaired the roof above it. Documentary evidence indicates that maintenance of the nave's ceiling – or its roof – was undertaken in 1662 by the workshop of José and Juan de Mora. The document details construction work, but it does not spell out whether a new ceiling was commissioned, leaving open the possibility that an earlier wooden ceiling may have been reused or renovated. Yet, there is no explicit indication of the existence or preservation of a previous *artesonado* in earlier literature (Gutiérrez Arriola 1997: 30–31). For instance, in the 1580s Diego Muñoz Camargo, Tlaxcala's earliest and most celebrated viceregal chronicler, wrote that the Tlaxcalan church was "covered in very well-worked (*muy bien labrada*) cedar of good size; it is roofed with terracotta tiles." But Muñoz Camargo also remarked on the overall architectural "modesty" of the building (Martínez Barcas and Sempat Assadourian 1991: 490–508).

The lack of a detailed description of the church's *artesonado* suggests that its peculiarity is the product of a modern academic construction, since it was not until the twentieth century that such a response emerged exclusively in regard to the ceilings. In 1697, for instance, the Italian traveler Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Carreri deemed the convent, as an architectural unit, worthy of note. Yet, when he stated that there was "nothing in Tlaxcala more notable than a Franciscan convent," the new *artesonado* was already in place (Ibarra Mazari 1992: 45). The convent, not its ceiling, impressed Gemelli Carreri. Neither travelers nor clergymen separated the ceiling from its substructure. Instead, they described it only at the time of repairs, as was the case with Vetancourt. In seventeenth-century Tlaxcala, a ceiling that came to be identified as mudejar in modern scholarship served to define a "Christian" space.

One finds similar ceilings throughout the Viceroyalty of Peru, in the metropolitan areas of Lima, Quito, Bogotá, and Cuzco as well as native parish churches, with most of the extant examples in the southern highlands. As at Tlaxcala, most of the extant *artesonados* in South America date from the seventeenth century, or are later repairs after earthquakes. The most elaborate and extreme example is the cupola over the main staircase of the principal cloister of the monastery of San Francisco in Lima (begun in 1673). What is seen today, however, is an eighteenth-century remodeled version of the ceiling that was reported in 1625 by Bernabé Cobo. He describes it as being architecturally the finest in all of Peru (Cobo 1956: 421). It had fallen into ruin after two earthquakes in 1687 and 1690. The existing cupola is a rather faithful reconstruction of the one rebuilt in 1725, and again after the earthquake of 1940. It is a spectacular geometric construction of gilded polychrome beams that create a lacework of both positive and negative repeated six-pointed stars, most likely constructed by the local architect (*alarife*) Francisco de Sierra (San Cristóbal Sebastián 2006: 115–120).

In Quito, the nave ceilings of San Francisco and Santo Domingo are perhaps the best-known examples of *artesonados*. San Francisco (begun 1534) (Figure 39.2) is a large monastic church with a choir, a nave, two side aisles, and side chapels, first built in the mid-sixteenth century. Santo Domingo (1580) is the monastic church of the Dominican order that was erected some years later just to the east of San Francisco. Both *artesonados* were completed in the early seventeenth

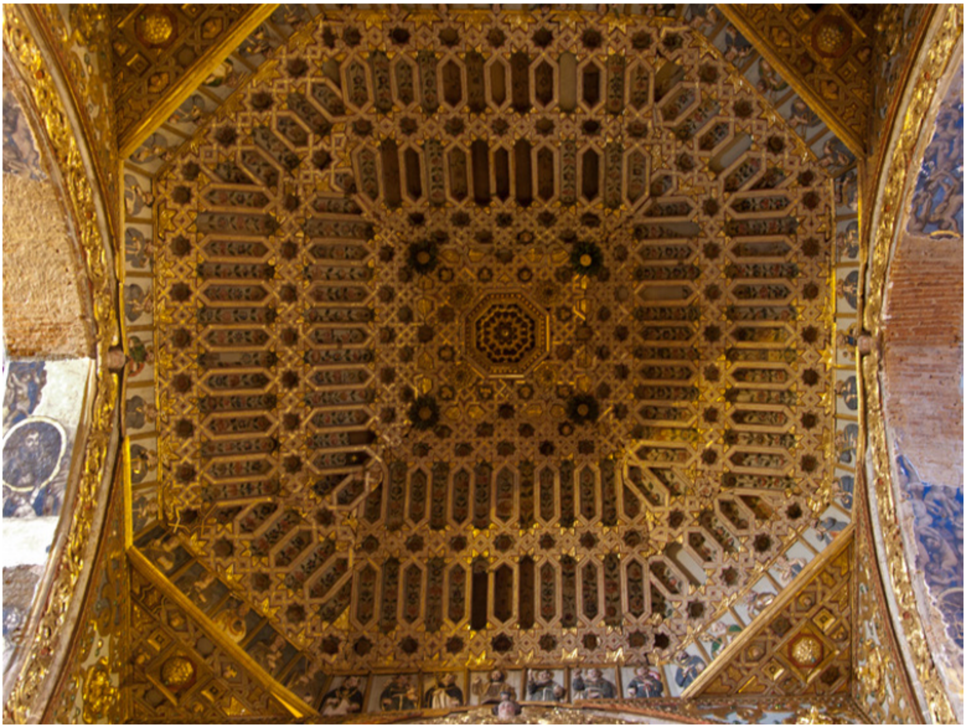

FIGURE 39.2 *Artesonado* at the Church of San Francisco in Quito, Ecuador. Source: Hernán L. Navarrete. Reproduced with permission.

century by local architects. What is perhaps most interesting, as Susan Webster has demonstrated, is that many of the designers and architects were natives, such as the master carpenter Martín Taguada, who built the *artesonado* of the parish church on San Roque (Webster 2012: 27–29). That is, the plans and models came from many sources, including the work of architects such as Sebastiano Serlio (d. 1554), Giacomo Barrozzi da Vignola (d. 1573) and others, but were blended into a local expression that today might seem eclectic or hybrid yet made perfect and coherent sense to the inhabitants of Quito (Dean and Leibson 2003: 5–35).

Some examples combine native technology and geometric motifs. For instance, in the Church of San Juan in Juli (Peru, begun 1534) located on the southern shores of Lake Titicaca, the ceiling of the apse was covered with a textile painted and gilded with eight-pointed stars and Maltese crosses in imitation of a complete *artesonado* (Mariátegui Oliva 1975: 7–9). If the covering was woven using silk and vicuña wool, as it has been reported, then the preciousness of the materials brings an Andean sense of value to this seventeenth-century faux *artesonado* that moves it far afield from anything that can be labeled "mudejar." Cloth is a major medium in the Andes, and vicuña is one of the world's finest wools. It is rare because the animal can be shorn once every three years, with each shearing producing about four ounces of fiber. Silk was acquired largely from China, imported through the Manila Galleon trade, and paid for, at least in part, from the silver that flowed from the fabulously rich mine of Potosí (Chuan 2001; Li 1981). Indeed, a parishioner or even a visiting Spaniard could interpret it only as locally made ornamentation framed within an orthodox style of Spanish Catholicism.

Cuzco, like Mexico and Quito, likely was filled with *artesonado*s. The seventeenth-century nave and apse of San Pedro Apóstol, a late sixteenth-century single-aisle church of the *reducción* (Indian town) of Andahuaylillas, south of Cuzco, is perhaps the best-known example (Figure 39.3). Like Tlaxcala, the *artesonado*s that can now be seen were created in the early to mid-seventeenth century by local artisans. The *artesonado* of Andahuaylillas was constructed between 1645 and 1649 by Martín de Torres, who is described as "vecino y moradorde Cuzco" (citizen and resident of Cuzco) and master builder of altars and sculpture (Castillo Centeno *et al.* 2012: 63; Cornejo Boutoncle 1960: 196). Again, this is a local artisan who was schooled in sculpture and assembly work as well as in making "mudejar" ceilings. His skills are to be seen holistically, although today one might say that the altar is Baroque, the sculpture late Renaissance, and the ceiling mudejar. These terms, however, never occur in the extant contracts between patron and artisan. Rather, what was often most important was the plan that was handed to them as well as the cultural identity of the artist himself. In most cases, they were born in or near the place where they worked and had never traveled to Spain. In this sense, the forms that seem so directly "mudejar" to the modern viewer have no such resonance for the residents who experienced them or the artisans who built them, because they had neither means for comparison nor terms to signal their distinctiveness as Andalusi-derived forms. Most importantly, in the case of

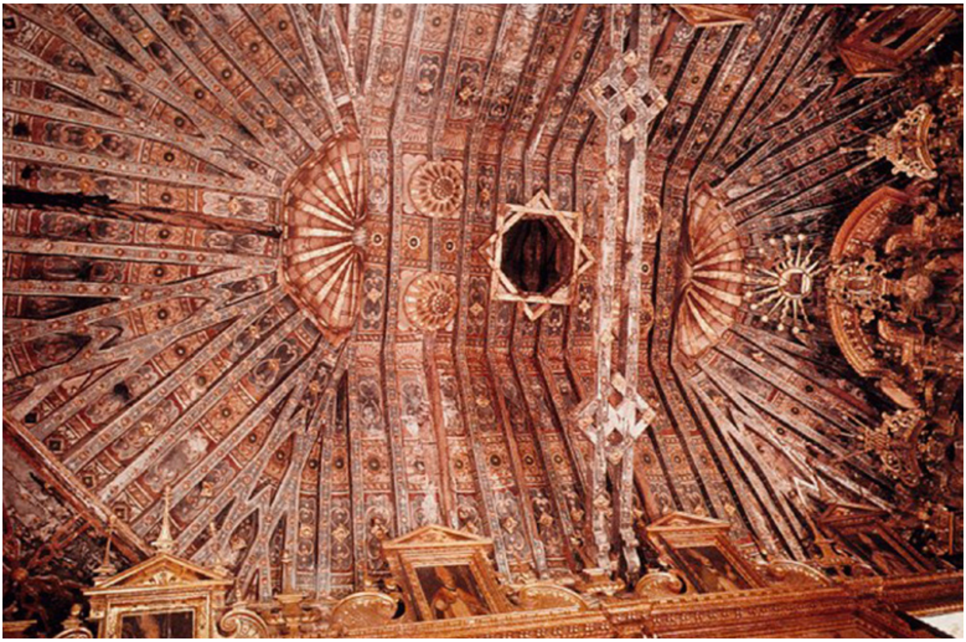

Figure 39.3 *Artesonado* at the Church of San Pedro Apóstol, Andahuaylillas, Peru. Source: Thomas B.F. Cummins.

places such as Tlaxcala and Andahuaylillas, the patrons of these churches were largely members of the native elite. The churches were for their people. These *caciques* or *curacas* demonstrated in their alliance with the clergy their "taste" for what was considered both beautiful and appropriate as prominent members of the Spanish colonial world. Their image of Islam or Muslims comes in an entirely different form than elaborate woodwork, as we shall see below.

It is vital, therefore, to understand the mudejar phenomenon in the Americas not as an immutable survival of an Islamic past but as an example of the transmission of taste, familiar forms, and technical knowledge essential to the accomplishment of the colonizing process. Two extant manuscripts on mudejar carpentry, Diego López de Arenas's *Breve compendio de la carpintería de lo blanco y tratado de alarifes* (Seville, 1633) and Fray Andrés de San Miguel's *De la carpintería de lo blanco* (Figure 39.4) in his *Tratado de arquitectura* (Mexico City, *c.* 1630), were written almost simultaneously on opposite shores of the Atlantic Ocean. More than providing proof of the emulation of European forms in the New World, the relationship between these two treatises highlights the idea that viceregal architects and craftsmen drew their knowledge from European traditions but utilized them to solve problems of a local nature. The transmission of specialized knowledge was an essential product of the colonizing project, which aimed to replicate the Old World in the New but in the end only made the new seem familiar.

There is no apparent direct relationship between the writings of Fray Andrés de San Miguel and Diego López de Arenas's treatise, one written in Mexico, the other in Spain; they were produced separately. There is a small chance that the Sevillian manuscript could have reached Mexico within the first three years of its publication, in time to influence Fray Andrés, but there is no way of telling at what stage of writing Fray Andrés found himself around 1636. There is evidence, however, that Diego López de Arenas's treatise found its way into some of the most sophisticated private libraries of the New World in later years, particularly those that specialized in scientific publications. For instance, Inquisition records demonstrate that the master of works of Mexico City's Metropolitan Cathedral Melchor Pérez de Soto owned a copy of the *Breve compendio de la carpintería de lo blanco* (Báez Macías 2007: 114; López de Arenas 1867; Torrejón Chaves 1992: 185). A second edition was printed in Seville in 1727, owing, no doubt, to its usefulness and popularity. Fray Andrés de San Miguel's treatise, on the other hand, exists only as a manuscript at the Benson Latin American Collection of the University of Texas at Austin. There is no evidence that the document circulated widely, though it was part of the Carmelite library in Mexico City until the late nineteenth century.

The lives of both authors offer important clues as to their motivations for writing the treatises as well as their intended applications. Fray Andrés de San Miguel was born in 1577 to a poor family in Medina Sidonia (Cádiz). He sailed to the Americas at the age of 15 in 1593, returned to Spain, and then re-emerged in 1600 as a Carmelite friar in Mexico City. Fray Andrés turned down an offer to become a priest in favor of his inferior position, as the lower rank afforded him time for scientific reading and carried the responsibility of direct involvement in the physical maintenance of the order's buildings. Fray Andrés was actively involved in technically challenging public works in Mexico City, such as the important drainage of the city center, and convent constructions throughout the valley of Mexico (Báez Macías 2007: 25–30, 35–84).

By contrast, little is known about the details of Diego López de Arenas's life. He was born in 1579 in Marchena (Seville) and by the time of publication of his *Breve compendio de la carpintería de lo blanco* in 1633, he had become *alcalde alarife* (chief of public works) of the city of Seville. Scholars have identified part of the corpus of his architectural work based on the author's own reference to their construction in the treatise. Among the identified works are the new ceiling and choir of the Church of Santa Paula in Seville as well as another above the stairwell to its convent. He was also responsible for the new construction of the ceiling of the Church of Santa María de la Asunción in Mairena (López de Arenas 1982: prologue). That he was involved in expansion and historic preservation efforts of fifteenth-century structures should come as no surprise. Diego López de Arenas was charged with maintaining the urban fabric of Seville in the seventeenth century; a city in steep decline owing to a worsening economic crisis, bouts of the plague, food shortages, and a serious population drop (Domínguez Ortiz 2006: 15–34).

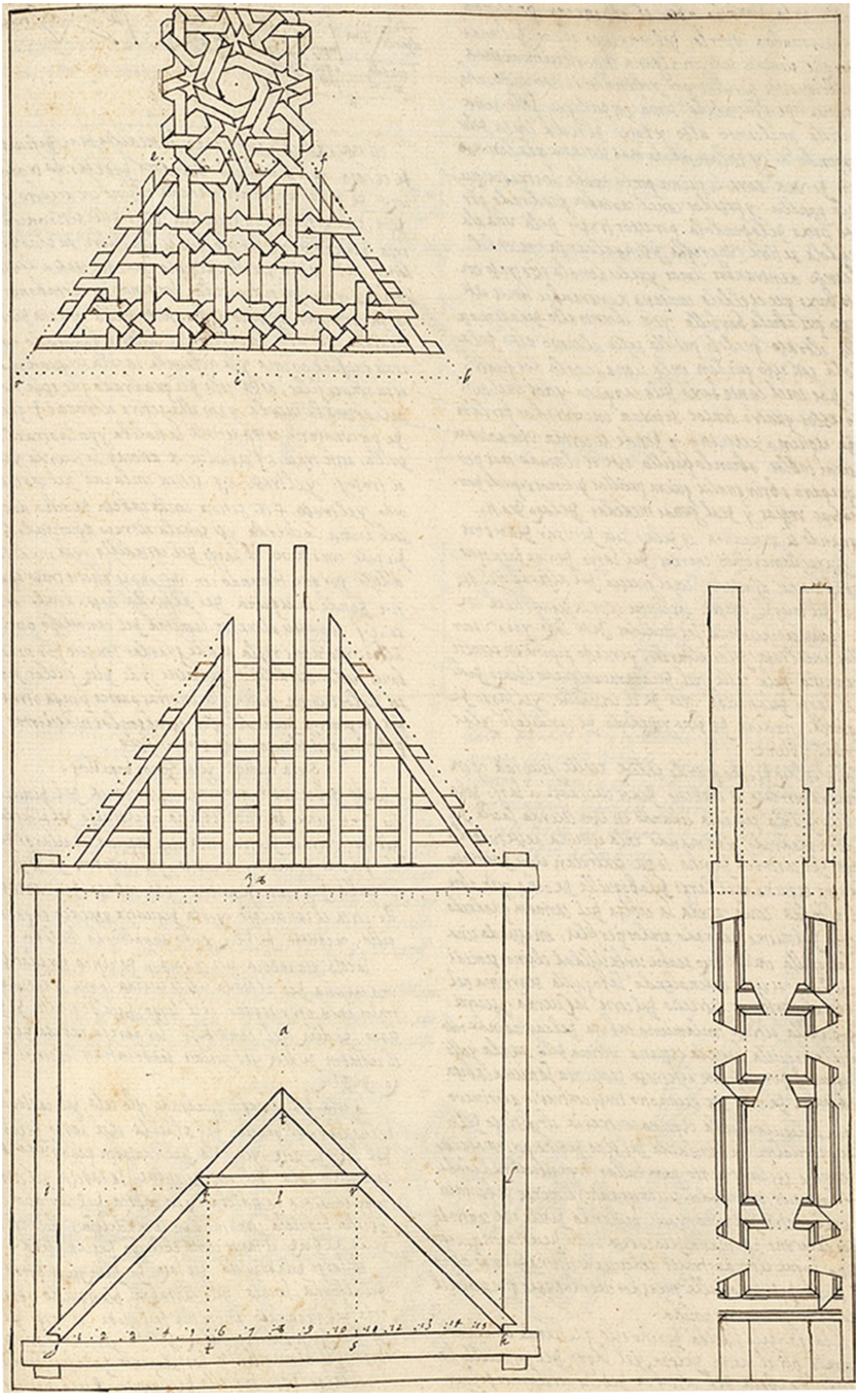
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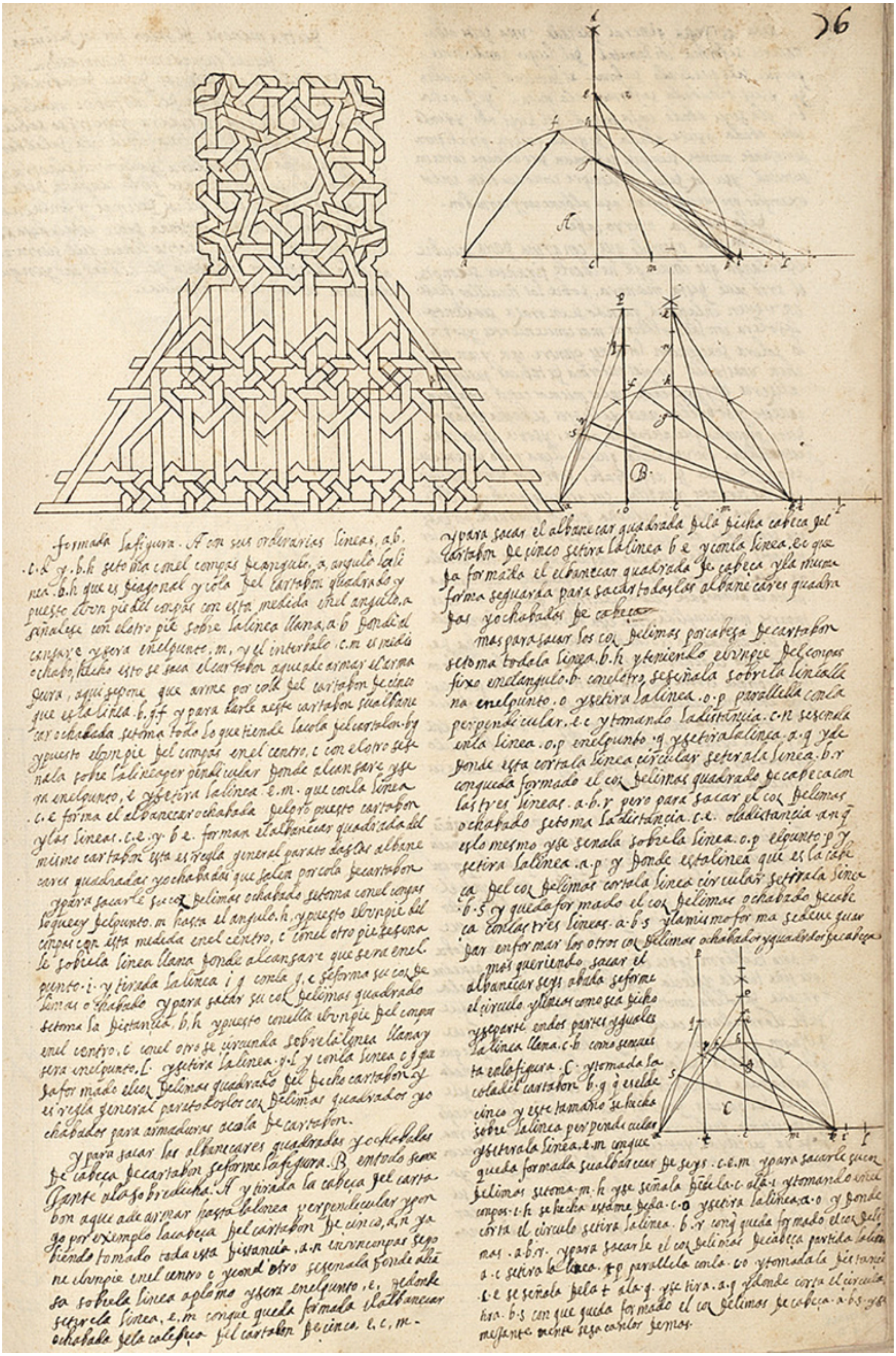
FIGURE 39.4 Fray Andrés de San Miguel, *Breve compendio de la carpintería de lo blanco.* (ms. G73). Source: Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.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formada la figura . A con sus ordinarias lineas, a.b. .c.d y .b.h se toma con el compas de angulo, a, angulo de la linea .b.h que es diagonal y cola del cartabon quadrado y puesto el un pie del compas con esta medida en el angulo .a señalese con el otro pie sobre la linea llana, a.b donde el compas caye y sera en el punto, m, y el interbalo .c.m es medio ochabo, hecho esto se saca el cartabon que ade armar el armadura, aqui se pone que arme por cola del cartabon de cinco que es la linea .b.g.f y para darle a este cartabon su albanecar ochabado se toma todo lo que tiene la cola del cartabon .b.g y puesto el un pie del compas en el centro, c con el otro se señala sobre la linea perpendicular donde alcansare y sera en el punto, e y se tira la linea .e.m. que con la linea .c.e forma el albanecar ochabado del propuesto cartabon y las lineas .c.e. y .b.e. forman el albanecar quadrado del mismo cartabon esta es regla general para todos los albanecares quadrados y ochabados que salen por cola de cartabon

y para sacarle su cozdelimos ochabado se toma con el compas lo que ay del punto .m hasta el angulo .h, y puesto el un pie del compas con esta medida en el centro, c con el otro pie se señale sobre la linea llana donde alcansare que sera en el punto .i. y tirada la linea i g con la g.c se forma su cozdelimas ochabado y para sacar su cozdelimos quadrado se toma la distancia .b.h y puesto con ella el un pie del compas en el centro .c con el otro se circunda sobre la linea llana y sera en el punto .l. y se tira la linea .g.l y con la linea c.g queda formado el cozdelimos quadrado del dicho cartabon y es regla general para todos los cozdelimos quadrados y ochabados para armaduras a cola de cartabon.

Y para sacar los albanecares quadrados y ochabados de cabeça de cartabon se forme la figura. B en todo semejante a la sobredicha. A y tirada la cabeça del cartabon que ade armar hasta la linea perpendicular y sea go por exemplo la cabeça del cartabon de cinco, a.n y abiendo tomado toda esta distancia .a.n con el compas se pone el un pie en el centro c y con el otro se señala donde alcansa sobre la linea a plomo y sera en el punto, e, de donde se tira la linea .e.m con que queda formado el albanecar ochabado de la cabeça del cartabon de cinco e.c.m.

y para sacar el albanecar quadrado de la dicha cabeça del cartabon de cinco se tira la linea b e y con la linea .e.c queda formado el albanecar quadrado de cabeça y la misma forma se guarda para sacar todos los albanecares quadrados y ochabados de cabeça

mas para sacar los cozdelimos por cabeça de cartabon se toma toda la linea .b.h y teniendo el un pie del compas fixo en el angulo .b. con el otro se señala sobre la linea llana en el punto .o y se tira la linea .o.p parallela con la perpendicular .e.c y tomando la distancia .c.n se señala en la linea .o.p en el punto .q y se tira la linea .a.q y de donde esta corta la linea circular se tira la linea .b.r con que queda formado el cozdelimos quadrado de cabeça con las tres lineas .a.b.r pero para sacar el cozdelimos ochabado se toma la distancia .c.e. o la distancia .a.n q̃ es lo mesmo y se señala sobre la linea .o.p el punto .p y se tira la linea .a.p y donde esta linea que es la cabeça del cozdelimos corta la linea circular se tira la linea .b.s y queda formado el cozdelimos ochabado de cabeça con las tres lineas .a.b.s y la misma forma se deve guardar en formar los otros cozdelimos ochabados y quadrados de cabeça

mas queriendo sacar el albanecar seysabado se forme el circulo y lineas como se a dicho y se parte en dos partes yguales la linea llana .c.b como se muestra en la figura .C. y tomada la cola del cartabon .b.g q̃ es el de cinco y este tamaño se hecha sobre la linea perpendicular y se tira la linea .e.m con que queda formado su albanecar de seys .c.e.m y para sacarle su cozdelimos se toma .m.h y se señala desde la .c. a la .i y tomando en el compas .i.h se hecha este mesmo desde .c.o y se tira la linea .a.o y donde corta el circulo se tira la linea .b.r con q̃ queda formado el cozdelimos .a.b.r. y para sacarle el cozdelimos de cabeça partida la linea a.c se tira la linea .t.p parallela con la .c.o y tomada la distancia .c.e se señala desde la t a la .q. y se tira .a.q y donde corta el circulo se tira .b.s con que queda formado el cozdelimos de cabeça .a.b.s. y semesmamente se ga con los demas.

FIGURE 39.4 (*Continued*)

Around 1630, Fray Andrés de San Miguel, then in Mexico, began to compile a treatise that encompassed several areas of architectural and mathematical knowledge, which he addressed in three separate compendia. Besides a section devoted to the technical exposition of mudejar carpentry, he included chapters on the Temple of Solomon, temples of Peru, spirituality ("inner temples"), and rules for the construction of Carmelite churches. Another section on structural concerns (how to build foundations), geometry, solar clocks, hydraulics, astronomy, and architectural drawing completes the *Tratado de arquitectura*. Interestingly, he also devoted sections of his treatise to the mathematical study of the amount of lime grains that fits on the Earth as well as a mathematical calculation of the grace of the Virgin. Although Fray Andrés's section on carpentry is our main concern, it is important to acknowledge the theoretical scope of his writings in order to elucidate his interest in the mudejar tradition. While his manuscript is not an organized corpus, but rather a compilation of varied subject matter, his interest in the study and application of geometry and arithmetic was an overwhelming motivation. His was, indeed, the first mathematical treatise written in New Spain (Domínguez Ortiz 2006: 85).

Similarly, Diego López de Arenas's Sevillian treatise was not exclusively devoted to the discussion of the art of mudejar carpentry. Rather, the *Breve compendio de la carpintería de lo blanco y tratado de alarifes* is divided into four sections, the first and longest of which is the treatise on carpentry. The following three chapters include the *Tratado de alarifes*, a professional handbook on the prestigious administrative position held by the author, the *Tratado de calibre*, focused on the geometry of artillery, and the *Tratado de los relojes*, a technical handbook on the construction of solar clocks. Not unlike Fray Andrés's treatise, all four chapters in Diego López de Arenas' publication indicate great concern with the science of geometry and its proper application, especially in matters that concerned a civil servant in the difficult environment of seventeenth-century Seville.

A comparative study of the authors' chapters devoted to the study of mudejar carpentry indicates that the most evident difference between Fray Andrés de San Miguel and Diego López de Arenas remains the nature of the authors' knowledge. Namely, Fray Andrés was a theoretician, while Diego López de Arenas wrote from the perspective of an experienced artisan. The presentation of the information corresponds to this very difference. Fray Andrés made use of nuanced vocabulary and a step-by-step explanation of complex techniques because he intended his treatise to aid the non-expert. There is no evidence to suppose that he was a carpenter himself, and indeed, some argue that an anonymous partner may have helped him to write the carpentry section (López Guzmán 1995: 178). The Carmelite offered basic information in his treatise, as his folios explain basic techniques and even detail their nomenclature. On the other hand, López de Arenas dedicated his printed book to masters and apprentices of the trade in the prologue to his treatise. The Sevillian *alarife* manipulated expert knowledge in a praxis-oriented fashion. For instance, he saw little benefit in utilizing plans for the construction of ceilings. All that he required for the establishment of the dimensions of all the wooden members was the measurement of the length and width of the ceiling space. In fact, most of the treatise is spent sharing shortcuts for the quick measurement, cut and joining of the ceilings' pieces (Nuere 1982: 343).

Treatises, by definition, seek to codify and correct the execution of works, rather than to establish new modes of creation. Besides the desire to promote high standards of artistic practice, they have long been regarded as public statements of refined knowledge. Undoubtedly, both authors were quite concerned with the display of their wisdom through their ability to make use of the applied sciences in the contemporary tradition of European treatise writers. But there were practical concerns as well. López de Arenas's circumstances as an expert carpenter occupying one of Seville's most prestigious public offices differ significantly from those of Fray Andrés. López de Arenas found himself at the crossroads of a tradition in transition, not only in terms of style but also in terms of the organization of skilled labor. He lived at a time when the secretive, hermetic nature of the craft guilds was beginning to witness changes that led to their disappearance in the eighteenth century. The increasing systematization of education in the sciences, applied mathematics, and architecture rendered the guild system obsolete. In addition, seventeenth-century Seville was a major urban center, affluent despite its decline, where Renaissance and Baroque architectural forms had long taken over. Undoubtedly, sensing the waves of change, López de Arenas sought to preserve a tradition that had been inherited from late medieval times and was deteriorating on nearly every front (Necipoğlu 1995: 23–27, 55–59).

The artistic environment of seventeenth-century Mexico differed greatly from that of Seville. The viceroyalty of New Spain, at the time of Fray Andrés's writings little more than a century old, worked to adapt Iberian forms to the needs of its cities. The initial intense efforts of Christianization had ended and a new process of formation of cultural identity and taste was already under way by the 1630s. Transmission of cultural information, at all levels, was essential for this development. Baroque, Gothic, and Renaissance styles were all alive and in production in New Spain. The mudejar was still pursued, even as it was facing a decline in popularity similar to that in Spain. It is possible that Fray Andrés's experience in the field of architecture made him aware of the dwindling popularity of the style and inspired him to codify its laws in the hope that it could aid in future preservation efforts.

A more adequate explanation for Fray Andrés's interest in mudejar carpentry, however, can be found in the rules of the guilds of New Spain. Artisanal guilds had been instituted in New Spain in 1526, only four years after the conquest, and were modeled after those in Spain. The carpenters' guild of Mexico and Puebla followed those of Seville, for instance. The streets of Mexico City which housed the artisanal shops were named after famous craft regions in Spain, such as Valladolid and Santiago de Compostela (Santiago Cruz 1960: 16). Regulating the guilds and their production ensured a continuation of Spanish aesthetic values as well as the quality of the large building itinerary that the new territories demanded.

Following the Sevillian pattern, Mexican carpenters had to demonstrate their proficiency in the application of the geometry of mudejar carpentry, especially its ceilings. In the laws of the guilds of Mexico City and Puebla de los Angeles, carpenters were divided according to specialty, which largely responded to their expertise in handling complex geometric decorations and ceilings. The carpenters' development and success in moving up the hierarchical ladder of the guild depended largely on their proven mastery of complex geometric forms (López Guzmán *et al.* 1992: 51). This idea is evinced by the guild's distinction between *carpinteros geométricos*, or specialized, highly skilled builders, and *lazeros*, that is, carpenters in charge of decorations. Unlike the guilds in Spain, however, Mexican guilds did not stipulate the length of time of each apprenticeship, resulting in potentially poorly trained craftsmen. It has been suggested that the need for skilled labor in the colonies far surpassed the luxury of proper training time, thus Fray Andrés de San Miguel's treatise can be seen as a response to a labor shortage (López Guzmán *et al.* 1992: 178). Because detailed knowledge of mudejar forms was necessary, Fray Andrés offered information in areas in which carpenters were least trained, such as the design and construction of complex structures like *artesonado*s, half domical structures, and *muqarnas*. Whether he wrote the treatise himself or simply offered editorial help, it seems that Fray Andrés's compendium responds to theoretical ideas and concerns that were in circulation among viceregal carpenters of the region, who were busy building and restoring structures. His ability to find the answers and codify them constitutes the extant treatise. In seventeenth-century viceregal Mexico, therefore, science, geometry, and an ancient tradition were synthesized as specialized carpentry knowledge, not as a product of nostalgia or as a revival of an Islamic past but in an effort to codify an essential, if rapidly evolving and disappearing artistic practice.

Not all artistic models and answers are found within the extensive Iberian corpus of codified knowledge, however. A detailed examination of an important corpus of northern European garden design treatises alongside a careful reading of a large amount of contemporary documentation recently culminated in a long overdue reinterpretation of the celebrated choir stalls of the Cathedral of Puebla (1719–1722) in central Mexico (Figure 39.5). Rendered impenetrable by the designation "mudejar" since the early twentieth century, the fine, inlaid, geometric, and aniconic decoration had eluded analysis for almost a century (Diez Barroso 1921). Patricia Díaz Cayeros has shown convincingly how a carefully crafted discourse of the cathedral choir space as an *hortus conclusus*, a deeply assimilated sense of ornament and respectability, and a thoroughly contemporary selective process within New Spain's wealthiest cathedral chapter made use of geometric forms in garden design treatises such as Jan van der Groen's popular *Den Nederlandsten Hovenier* (Amsterdam, 1691), among others (Díaz Cayeros 2013: 241–285). Moreover, Díaz Cayeros has been able to assign meaning to the heavily abstracted compositions (heavenly allusions, ideals of spiritual pleasure, meaningful dates in the liturgical calendar, and so on) that characterize the ornamentation of the Puebla choir stalls – and even to the exquisite selection of precious woods employed in their construction. This

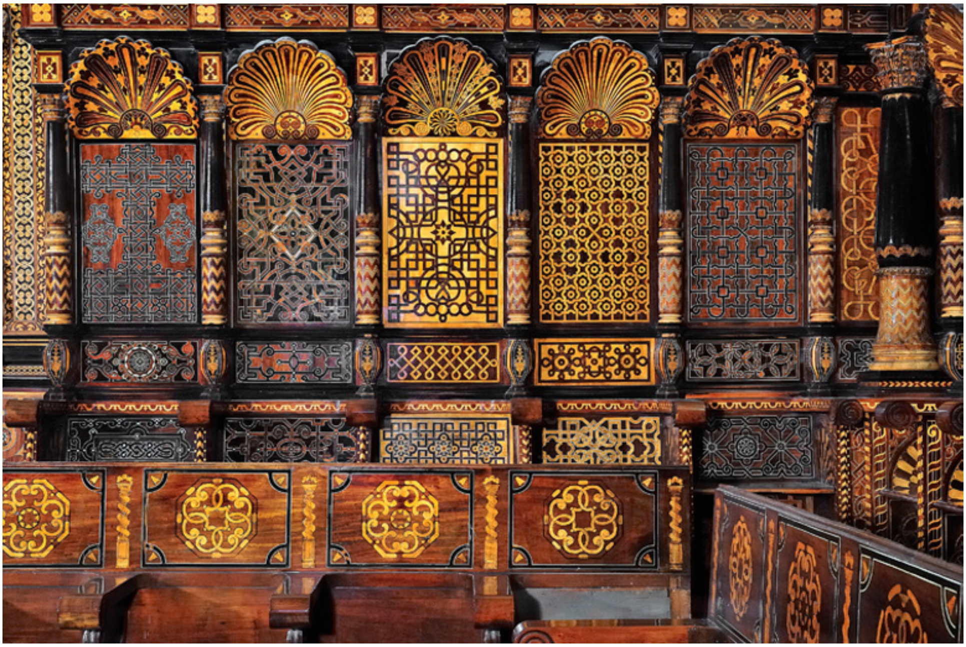

FIGURE 39.5 Choir stalls at the Cathedral of Puebla, Mexico. Source: Carlos Varillas Contreras. Reproduced with permission.

ground-breaking re-evaluation of a formerly canonical work of American mudejar studies has rooted the object firmly in its eighteenth-century cultural context and, thus, moved it away from an anachronistic discourse of Islamic art survivals.

At the heart of the idea of the American mudejar phenomenon as an Islamic survival is the notion that Iberian colonial mentalities were perpetually stuck in medieval frameworks. This perception also feeds the idea of an undying mudejar aesthetic in the viceregal world. The study of Santiago Matamoros-Mataindios (Saint James the Moor-Indian Slayer) and his iconography is exemplary in this respect. For many modern scholars, the figure of the saint constitutes a reflection of the static, medieval, Iberian character that was fixed in a "Reconquest" mindset, unclear about the differences between its frontiers, between "Indians" and "Muslims," and confused by the "spiritual" and "temporal" dimensions of life (Cardaillac 2002: 128; Choy 1985: 339). Not surprisingly, the cult of Santiago in America has been labeled "an example of mudejarismo" (Cardaillac 2002: 125). Yet a comparative analysis of the complexities of the cult in American soil highlights the adaptability of the saint to meet the needs of the nascent viceregal societies.

The legend of the Apostle Saint James, or Santiago is, without a doubt, the single most successful effort of medieval Iberian mythmaking as evinced by its permanence in the devotional and political consciousness of Iberians during more than a thousand years. Santiago is the only Apostle said to have set foot on Iberian soil. His tomb, miraculously discovered in 885, gave rise to a rapidly rising cult whose popularity was catalyzed by the raid on the northern city of Compostela by the Umayyad caliph of Cordoba, al-Mansur, in 995, which destroyed the city of Compostela and the saint's shrine. The thirteenth-century chronicle *De Rebus Hispaniae* popularized the miraculous military involvement of Santiago at the mythical Battle of Clavijo, where according to the apocryphal story, the Apostle intervened physically in favor of King Ramiro I of Asturias in the year 844. As his army fought against that of the Cordoban caliph ʿAbd al-Rahman, Santiago appeared mounted on a white horse, wielding a sword, swiftly tipping the scale in favor of the Christian army. In the fourteenth and fifteen centuries, as conquest became a reality rather than a miracle that could be attained only through divine intervention, the Christian armies routinely used the battle cry "Santiago y cierra España" (roughly, "Santiago, and close ranks for Spain!"). The conflation of monarchy, nation, and patron saint, as well as the imbrications of devotional intensity and political potential, is evident throughout the story. Since its origin, the cult of Santiago has been linked to the power and authenticity of the Iberian monarchy, which made use of its symbolic potential whenever the need arose.

If we consider Santiago as a multivalent, adaptable, and thus, mutable emblem that served an important purpose throughout the viceregal period and across its geographies, it becomes evident that in the New World, the saint gave concrete form to the abstract and absent figure of the Habsburg monarch, representing chivalrous ideals, socioreligious pre-eminence and a new political order. Representations of Santiago were always decidedly contemporary manifestations that reflected the needs and realities of viceregal society as well as the imperial mentality of the Habsburg monarchs. The need to celebrate victory, maintain order, and negotiate native and Iberian elite identities all play a part in the development of the viceregal Jacobean cult. In this manner, the cult of Santiago functioned as it did since the medieval period, but did not serve medieval purposes. The visual representation of the Apostle was adapted accordingly to suit the politically motivated transformations of his cult.

The *Tablón de Tlatelolco* (Figure 39.6) exemplifies the apostle's new American life. The legendary Franciscan temple of Santiago Tlatelolco (in present-day Mexico City), where it originally adorned the altarpiece, was erected in the year 1535 on the site of an Aztec temple dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, which as mentioned above was termed a "cue" (a term derived from the Castilian *mezquita*, mosque) by Bernal Diaz del Castillo. The convent also housed the renowned School of Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, one of two institutions exclusively devoted to the education of native elites. The *Tablón* is said to have been produced at the school by an indigenous carver named Miguel Mauricio. It is the only extant fragment of the high altarpiece produced under the aegis of Fray Juan de Torquemada, who undertook a complete preservation effort of the run-down church around 1610.

The relief shows the saint as a typically larger than life knight mounted on a white horse, wielding a sword in a standard depiction. Upon closer inspection, a

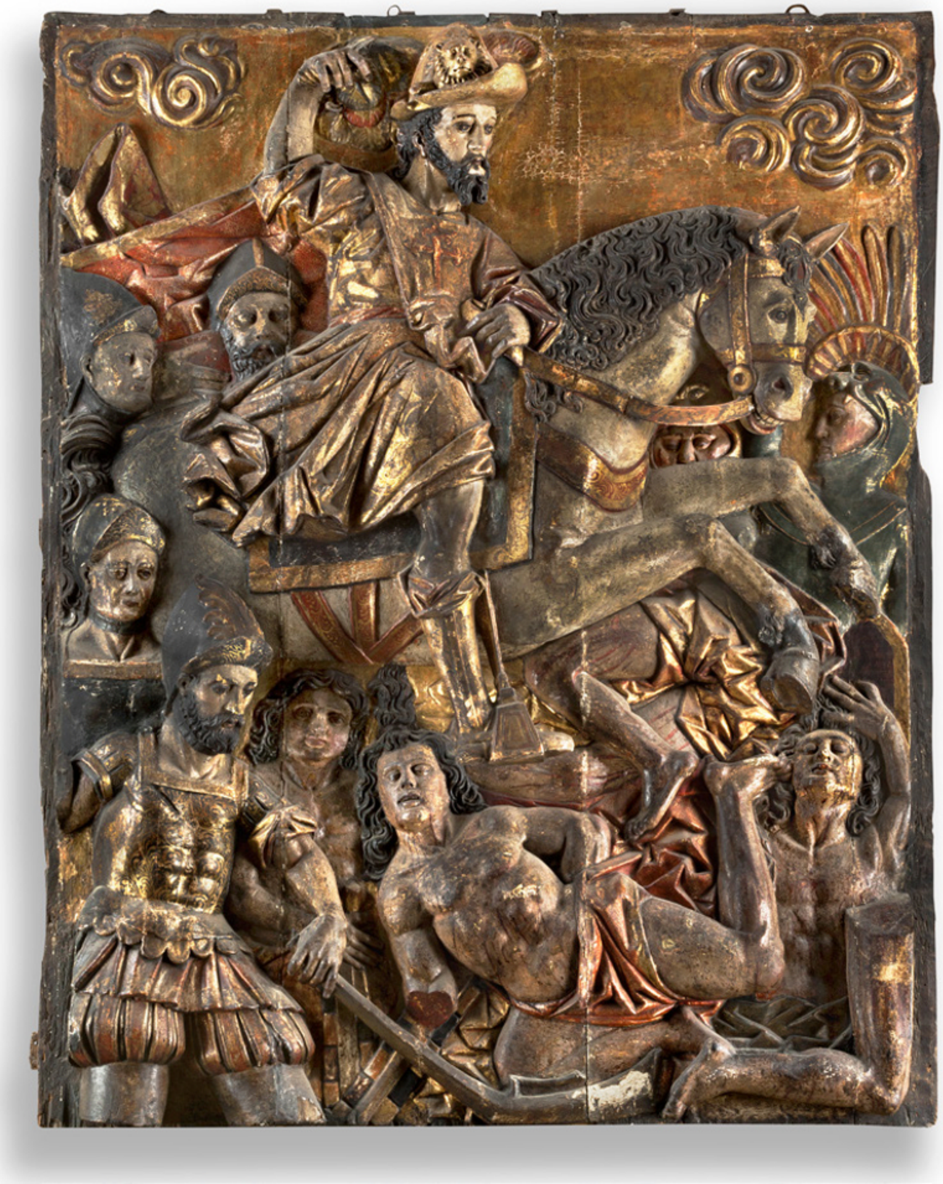

Figure 39.6 Miguel Mauricio (attributed). *Tablón de Tlatelolco*, Church of Santiago Tlatelolco, Mexico City. Source: Michel Zabé. Reproduced with permission.

feathered warrior, possibly a Tlaxcalan ally, is shown at his right, opposite the mangled and half-naked bodies of indigenous fighters, one of whom is shown defeated, following pre-Hispanic custom, by the tuft of hair that the Apostle's horse seems to yank violently. Here, Santiago Matamoros (Moor Slayer) is wholly transformed into Mataindios (Indian Slayer), and his representation signifies a sort of culmination of the evangelization phase of the colonizing process: the actors are central Mexican, the artist is a Christianized and acculturated Amerindian who works for the Catholic Church – and therefore for the Habsburg monarchy – under the direction of a prominent Franciscan. The carving is also representative of the fusion of artistic conventions that took place after the conquest of Mexico. For instance, dismembered bodies had no place in pre-Hispanic depictions of success in battle. They were shown, instead, in representations of ritual sacrifices that followed victorious campaigns (Díaz Cayeros 2006: 267). By 1610, such changes were cemented in the artistic life of central Mexico, in the same way that, by then, the figure of Santiago was established as patron saint of Tlatelolco. The commission of the new altarpiece, complete with an exceptional representation of the Apostle as a crowning piece for the remodeled eponymous temple, should be anticipated as nothing out of the ordinary or out of its time. In Tlatelolco, the representation of Santiago became an important part of an effective and accessible language of victory in a pre-eminent viceregal parish.

In Peru, as in Mexico, Santiago is the first saint to perform a miraculous intervention on behalf of the Spanish by his appearance in the sky above Cuzco and his descent to earth, scattering the Inca army that was besieging the last holdout of the Spanish conquistadores in 1535. This intercession of Santiago Mataindios in Cuzco's plaza quickly became a subject of painting and sculpture, especially in the city that was the miraculous site. For example, a mural was painted on the wall of the cathedral facing the plaza, commemorating what had occurred there. As the Mestizo author Garcilaso de la Vega wrote, upon seeing the mural the Indians cried: "'A Viracocha (Quechua name given to Spaniards) like this one was who destroyed us in this plaza.' The painting still existed in 1570 when I came to Spain" (de la Vega 1617: chapter 25). Later, when the cathedral was rebuilt, an oil painting depicting the miracle was displayed facing the plaza and could be seen from there when the main portal was open. More importantly, an anonymous seventeenth-century sculpture of Santiago with a sword raised above his head and astride a rearing white stallion is venerated in a side chapel of the cathedral. Below the horse is a kneeling Inca, appearing as if supporting the trampling horse. This sculpture is processed during Corpus Christi by the confraternity attached to Cuzco's parish church of Santiago.

Other transformations take place around the representation of Santiago in both New Spain and Peru, and they were connected directly to the "culture and politics of viceregal power" (Cañeque 2004). These included dances and re-enactments of "the battle between the Christians and Moors," in which Native Americans played both roles from the very beginning, and which have continued to be performed, just as the statue of Santiago Matamoros is processed in the streets of Cuzco every Corpus Christi. However, the cult of Santiago Matamoros and the battle between the Christians and the Moors not only harken to the militant role that the saint played in the Christian conquest of Spain and then its extension in the conquest of the New World, but also recognized Santiago's part in the modern crusade against the Ottoman threat. Almost from the beginning, the treasures gained in the conquest of the Americas were turned towards financing the campaigns against the expansion of the Ottoman sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–1566) into the Mediterranean. For instance, the most famous example is the use of the ransom of Atahualpa in Peru to pay for Charles V's campaign against the Ottoman sultan Süleyman and the grand admiral of the Ottoman navy, Barbarossa, in Tunis. Indeed, the Habsburg imperial anxiety about the Ottoman menace had tremendous echo and artistic expressions throughout the viceroyalties (Feliciano 2011; Gruzinski 2008).

More significantly, in terms of Amerindian participation in this new crusade against Islam, Pope Gregory XIII (r. 1572–1585) extended the "Bula de la Santa Cruzada" (Bull of the Holy Crusade) to the Indies in 1573 (Cummins 2011: 223–225). First granted in 1089 by Pope Urban II, it offered indulgences in recognition of those who served in the war against the Muslims during the Christian conquest of Spain. Pope Gelasius II renewed it when Alfonso I of Aragon campaigned to reconquer Zaragoza in 1118. A general Bull for the whole of Spain was offered by Clement IV in 1265, when the kings of Aragon and Castile joined in war against Murcia (Goñi Gaztambide 1958). When Gregory III extended the Bull to the Americas, it recognized that the residents and citizens of the Indies could not easily join physically in the wars against the Turks, so it offered indulgences to those who either paid for someone to go to war or simply paid for the indulgence, which took the material form of a printed page outlining its terms. Such a printed Bull, dated February 22, 1578, found in a native burial in Peru begins

> Bulla de Sancta Cruzada con muchas y muy grandes gracias Indulgencias … y estaciones concedidas y amplificadas por nuestro muy Sancto padre Gregorio XIII para todos los … Christianos vezinos y moradores estantes y habitantes en las Indias: Islas y tierra firme … Oceano sujetas a la Catolica real Majestad el Rey nuestro Señor en socorro y ayuda de la guerra contra los infieles en defensa publica de la Christianidad.
>
> (Bull of the Holy Crusade with many and great Indulgences … and stations granted and extended by our most Holy father Gregory XIII for all of the … Christian inhabitants and dwellers of the Indies: Islands and mainland … subjects of the royal Catholic Majesty the King our Lord in relief and support of the war against the infidels in public defense of Christianity. (Cummins 2011: 223–225)

The Bull also mentions Spain's war against the Turks in particular and its proclamation and promulgation by the archbishops in Mexico City and Lima. After their proclamation, the benefits of the Bull were to be preached to all inhabitants in sermons both in Spanish and native languages. There is evidence, for instance, of several sermons concerning the "Bulla de Sancta Cruzada" written in Quechua, the language of the Inca. If such sermons were written and published in Peru it is likely that they were also created in various native languages (Itier 1992: 135–146; Rivet and de Créqui-Montfort 1951: 25).

Thus, the early modern war against Islam took on real meaning in the religious lives of all Native Americans as well as Spaniards, Creoles, and African Americans. In the southern Andes, this struggle between Christianity and Islam, Spain and "the Turk" took on a visual form in painting and sculpture that became very popular. The composition of *The Defense of the Eucharist* (Figure 39.7) consists of the image of the standing ruling Spanish monarch, sword in hand, posed in defense of the consecrated Host displayed before him in a gold monstrance held by the first saint of the Americas, Santa Rosa of Lima (1586–1616, canonized 1667). On the other side is an Ottoman Turk, sometimes armed, who attempts to topple the monstrance with a rope. The earliest known image of this type

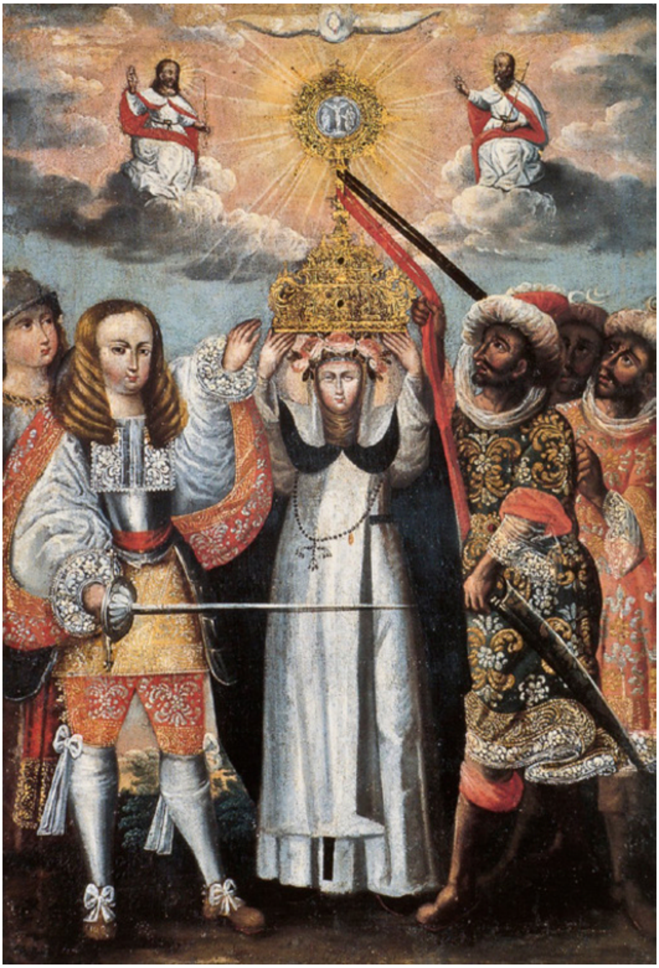

FIGURE 39.7 *The Defense of the Eucharist*. Source: Museo Pedro de Osma. Reproduced with permission.

appears during the reign of Charles II (1665–1700), 100 years after Pope Gregory extended the "Bula de la Santa Cruzada" to the Indies. The motivation behind the surge in the iconography of *The Defense of the Eucharist* was no doubt rooted in local theological and social debates, but the anxiety caused by the spike in Ottoman military aggression that culminated in the Second Siege of Vienna in 1683 unquestionably played a role as well (Wuffarden 2006: 306–308).

Just as the "Bula de la Santa Cruzada" was promulgated throughout the Americas in order to raise funds in defense of Christian Europe, the iconography of this painting – like that of the *Tablón de Tlatelolco*, and the statue of Santiago in Cuzco's cathedral – was spread to the most remote regions, as can be seen in the eighteenth-century wood carving from the Jesuit Church of San Javier de Moxos (present-day Bolivia) (Figure 39.8), which formerly belonged

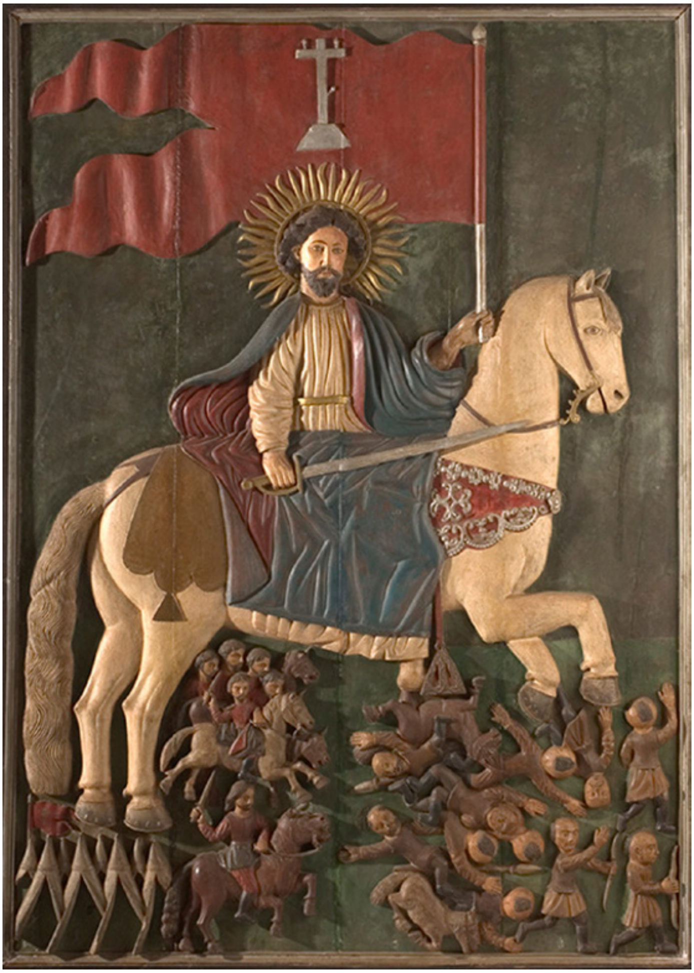

FIGURE 39.8 Saint James, Moxos, Bolivia. Source: Jaime Cisneros. Reproduced with permission.

in an altarpiece. The Bohemian-born Adalberto Marterer (1690–1753), a Jesuit priest who lived and worked throughout the region of Llanos de Mojos, is usually credited with its creation, although there is no documentation to prove his direct involvement (Kühne and Stratton-Pruitt 2006: 318). The Moxos panel has been published multiple times and exhibited twice. In all instances, it has been identified as Saint James the Moor Killer, no doubt because Jacobean iconography is commonly understood to be static. Yet, this interesting image belongs to a genre of paintings of Turks destroying or profanating sacred images that seems to have originated in the anti-Protestant visual polemics of the Low Lands, and which drew heavily on established anti-Semitic tropes (Dupeux *et al.* 2000; Feliciano 2011; Schnitzler 2002).

The conventional depiction of a large-scale Santiago on an enormous white horse whose front hooves trample over infidels while his rear protects the Christian armies is offset by the fact that the Apostle's victims do not seem to be either Muslims or Amerindians. Their shaved and tufted hair style, as well as their facial hair and features, suggest that the soldiers are Far Eastern, perhaps specifically Chinese. This panel is one of five relief sculptures depicting scenes of the life of Saint Francis Xavier, including one of Saint Francis Preaching in India. Saint Francis Xavier, a founding member of the Society of Jesus and a companion of St. Ignatius of Loyola, landed in Goa in 1541, where he evangelized until 1549, when he traveled to Japan. He returned to Goa two years later and in 1552 traveled to China. He died in the Chinese island of Sancian, where he fell ill before he could reach the mainland. In his letters from Japan, he refers to China as a promised land for the evangelist as follows:

> Opposite to Japan lies China, an immense empire … I find, from the Chinese themselves, that amongst them may be found many people of many different nations and religions, and, as far as I could gather from what they said, *I suspect that among them are Jews and Mahometans* … China is that sort of kingdom, that if the seed of the Gospel is once sown, it may be propagated far and wide. (Coleridge 1890: 331–350; McNeil and Iriye 1971: 20–30)

In the context of the narrative content of the altarpiece, where this relief sculpture belonged, and the Moxos Jesuit mission region where this work of art was likely created, the presence of the Apostle championing the cause of Christianity in the Far East is not at all surprising. In this triumphant representation, the Apostle Santiago is depicted achieving the spiritual victory that Saint Francis Xavier's untimely death prevented. It also reaffirms the preeminence of martyrdom as triumph in Jesuit thought, both fitting subject matter for this seemingly unusual example of the "art of the missions." Here, however, anti-Islamic visual tropes provide the model for yet another viceregal transformation of an otherwise canonical subject matter within the greater Iberian devotional repertoire.

Just as the complexities of Iberian peninsular and viceregal societies must be differentiated and characterized in any study of colonial life, so should they be taken into consideration in the analysis of their artistic past. The term "mudejar," with its direct associations to the Andalusi past, has long conjured inaccurate categorizations of the viceregal monumental landscapes that tie it directly and unmediated to the arts of Islamic Spain. Thus understood, the mudejar becomes a simple and indecipherable cultural survival – a cultural feature void of meaning which "may continue to exist, simply because it has existed" (Tylor 1871: 70–72). In turn, such a perception implies a latent and passive process of absorption, connected to a long lost past but disconnected from the complexities of the societies that continued to make use of the aesthetic information encoded in the works of art. Based on the material presented here, we contend that the mudejar aesthetic provided an artistic model that was effectively and comprehensively transformed by the practical needs, ethnic components, and cultural associations of vastly different societies across the Americas.

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Part VII

Modernity, Empire, Colony, and Nation (1700–1950)

Although previously judged as derivative and uninteresting, art histories of the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries are on the rise and flourishing, thanks to the revisionist perspectives of pioneering studies. The modern era ushers in the dissolution of Islamic empires and the formation of nation states, along with isms (such as nationalism, colonialism, Orientalism, and modernism) that informed the arts and architecture as well as their changing institutional frameworks. These two-and-a-half centuries cannot simply be lumped together without an understanding of their notable differences, as transformations were gradual and already launched by the late seventeenth century, culminating with more radical changes brought about in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly with World War I and World War II that reconfigured the political geography of the globe.

Starting with Napoleon's expedition to Egypt (1798) and the French seizure of Algeria from the Ottomans in 1832, European colonizers introduced new institutions and reforms in regions under their sphere of influence, such as the British East India Company that eventually imposed direct colonial rule in 1858, the Russian regimes that exercised control over Central Asia and beyond, and the "soft colonization" of late Ottoman territories by their German allies. Although the Ottoman Empire and Iran were never directly colonized, indirect pressures from Western powers were strongly felt in the form of special concessions and privileges, including permission for archaeological excavations. Far too complex to be outlined here, the intricacies of these international relations and shifting political–cultural contexts will be explored in the following chapters. Starting with the nineteenth century, the emergence of archaeological excavations, museums, international exhibitions, catalogues, the art market, and academic publications contributed to the birth of the field that constitutes the subject of these two volumes of *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*. With art history being

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a latecomer, this field emerged at the interstices of Oriental studies, epigraphy, archaeology, restoration/preservation, museology, and the art market in the early twentieth century, when most of its currently prevalent approaches emerged.

A leitmotif unifying the era under consideration is the ceaseless negotiation between continuity and change that shaped diverse experiences of modernity. The previous dominance of court workshops began to give way to the employment of increasingly independent multinational artists and architects, the opening of academies of art and architecture, as well as schools for the revival of disappearing traditional crafts. In addition to these institutional transformations, Islamic visual cultures everywhere were impacted by the growing prestige of Western artistic norms, the widespread endorsement of global visual technologies of representation and emergent media, as well as revivalist reinterpretations of older forms.

This section opens with Chanchal Dadlani and Yuthika Sharma's chapter on late Mughal visual culture (1658–1858) in the Indian subcontinent, which discusses the acceptance of innovative media like lithography and photography alongside reformulations of traditional Mughal artistic conventions within and outside courtly spheres. The authors also highlight the prevailing signifying power of Mughal architectural and ornamental forms even after the dismantling of the imperial dynasty where they originated. In that sense, paralleling the afterlife of the Mudejar tradition in the Americas, forms associated with the late Mughal context become a multicultural and supradynastic Indian idiom connoting rulership and the politics of pleasure. This idiom was mediated by the new patrons of regional successor states and the colonial ambitions of the British and French East India Companies. In a similar vein, Talinn Grigor's article analyzes the emulation of Safavid art and architecture as an esteemed idiom in post-Safavid Iran. Focusing on the artistic production of the Zand (1750–1794), Qajar (1794–1925), and Pahlavi (1925–1979) dynasties, she also considers the revisitation of pre-Islamic Persian antiquity (Zoroastrian/Mazdaic, Achaemenid, and Sasanian), examining the role played by kings and reformers as agents of change and continuity in the politics of modernity and colonialism. The chapter attests to the enduring appeal of the Taq-i Kisra, the fabled palace iwan of the pre-Islamic Sasanian kings of Iran, into the twentieth century when it was used as a model for the 1939 Iran Bastan Museum in Tehran. Unlike India, however, modern Iran was not colonized, a difference that colored its self-representation through the arts and architecture, as well as the discourses of nationalist art historiography.

The next two chapters are focused on processes of modernization in the late Ottoman Empire. Shirine Hamadeh's chapter on the growth of a public sphere in the eastern Mediterranean echoes parallel developments in India and Iran. Also touched upon in the previous section on early modernity (by Tülay Artan, Sussan Babaie and Çiğdem Kafescioğlu), this phenomenon gained momentum in the eighteenth century, informed as it was by increasing social mobility, urbanization, and modernization. Referring to late Ottoman cities like Istanbul, Izmir, Salonika, Samokov, Sarajevo, Beirut, Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo, Hamadeh looks at old and new spaces of sociability (bathhouses, fountains, urban squares, taverns, coffeehouses, public parks, and theatres) in light of the changing cultures of consumption, recreation and political dissent, as well as modern institutions.

The chapter by Nebahat Avcıoğlu and Mercedes Volait, on the other hand, introduces an innovative comparative framework for architecture in two major Ottoman cities, Istanbul and Cairo, tracing the remarkable parallelism of their journey from empire to modernism. This is a tale of two cities that remained distinctive but related and sometimes mirrored each other. The struggle against the competing forces of tradition and modernity is a common thread throughout this chapter. Sharing a notion of cosmopolitan imperialism, royal and elite patrons in both cities increasingly employed European or Levantine architects to design hotels, department stores, theatres, embassies, and waterfront mansions, revivalist and European styles being replaced by the 1950s with Americanization.

The last three chapters of this section scrutinize interconnected subjects: the emergence of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century museums, practices of collecting, artistic revivalism, and avant-garde modernism. Wendy Shaw addresses the collecting of Islamic art in Islamic lands, with a focus on modern museums and architectural revivalism. Her chapter is complemented by that of Stephen Vernoit, who presents a survey of categories of collecting Islamic art in the West, both individual and institutional, also discussing the problems such categories raise for the study of Islamic art today. Both chapters draw attention to the roles of collecting and museum displays in the construction of religious, national, and ethnic identities. Vernoit speculates that the recent emphasis on collectors in scholarship on Islamic art may, in fact, "strengthen the Western narrative of art," despite the forward-looking attempt "to redress the subject for a postcolonial era." The last chapter by Rémi Labrusse emphasizes the enthusiastic reception of Islamic arts in modern Europe as a remedy for the crisis of representation. His subtle analysis challenges the prevailing idea, ever since the publication of Edward Said's influential book on the subject, that the colonial imperialist ideology of Orientalism was the sole mode of European reception of Islamic art. Complementing and complicating this idea, Labrusse highlights the co-existence of a genuinely positive Western "islamophilia," and acknowledges the liberating role of inspirations drawn from Islamic abstraction and particularly ornament on artists, designers, and architects practicing in Europe and the United States at the end of the nineteenth century.

This chapter also forms a bridge to the next section with Heghnar Watenpaugh's introduction to the historiography of the name of the field, tracing the eventual displacement of racially defined ethnic characterizations (like "Arab," "Moorish," "Persian," "Turkish," and "Indian" art) by the wider category of "Muhammedan," "Muslim," or "Islamic" art. The latter term, which gained currency from the late nineteenth century onward in several French, German/Austrian, and imperial Ottoman publications endowed the field of Islamic art with a more inclusive, though not unproblematic, universal framework.

40

Beyond the Taj Mahal: Late Mughal Visual Culture

Chanchal Dadlani and Yuthika Sharma

The narrative of Mughal visual culture has long been shaped by the fortunes of the Mughal state. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Mughal Empire occupied a position of utmost political, economic, and demographic dominance in South Asia. As rulers of one of the most powerful early modern empires, with an estimated population of 100–125 million people, the Mughals easily surpassed the Uzbeks, Safavids, and Ottomans in wealth. They traced their paternal lineage to the "House of Timur," founded by the Central Asian Turko-Mongol ruler Timur (d. 1405) and to the Mongol ruler Chinggis Khan (d. 1227) on the maternal side, but it was not long before Mughal high culture absorbed the intellectual and linguistic heritage of a variety of Indian, Iranian, and Central Asian traditions on the ground, forming the basis of a vibrant Indo-Persianate culture (see Golombek and Koch, CHAPTER 32).

Founded in 1526 by Zahiruddin Babur (r. 1526–1530), the economy of the Mughal state flourished, so that by the reign of the third ruler Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar (r. 1556–1605), the Mughal court and the imperial workshops served as the epicenter of court arts and architectural production. The subsequent reigns of Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) and Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658) saw architecture and the visual arts mature into a unified expression during which structural, formal, and ornamental aspects of design were now recognizably employed in the service of an imperial style. For European travelers to the Mughal court, the Taj Mahal (1632–1643), the grand mausoleum built for Shah Jahan's favorite wife Arjumand Banu Begum (d. 1631), and the lavishly bejeweled Peacock Throne (*takht-i taus*) (1635) served as the quintessential visual emblems of refined artistic taste and opulence.

In contrast, the "later Mughals" were accorded relative ignobility, resulting from the perception that a widespread cultural depravation followed the

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disintegration of the centralized Mughal state in the eighteenth century. The narrative of artistic decline is one that has resurfaced time and again in both the history and historiography of this field, despite the call for its re-theorization (Asher 1992; Juneja 2001: 14–29). As this suggests, the mirroring of culture and politics has been a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the mapping of politics onto later Mughal visual culture has often presumed a lack of artistic vigor at the Mughal center, a view that this chapter actively seeks to counter. On the other, it has enabled the rethinking of the relationship between the Mughal center and its provinces (*subas*), positioning these successor states as new centers for cultural production (Asher 1993, 1994, 2002). This creates, in our view, a platform for theorizing the nature of Mughal identity and its adaptations and transformations in regional centers beyond the Mughal court. Indeed, the relevance of Mughal ideas in a fast-changing political climate is an important question that informs our inquiry. This chapter takes the beginning of the reign of ʿAlamgir (also known as Aurangzeb, r. 1658–1707) as its point of departure and concludes with the official end of Mughal rule in 1858. It considers the nature of Mughal visual culture over a 200-year span and the shifts from early modernity to modernity that defined this period. This era witnessed the rise of regional polities and the merchant class, and an increased South Asian presence in the Indian Ocean maritime trade. The political reorganization of the Mughal state, the rise of trading ports, the appearance of a new class of patrons, and the growing territorial ambitions of the English and French East India Companies form an important basis for our discussion. In architecture, the most recognizable shifts included the appropriation of Mughal visual codes at regional courts, changing ideas about urban space, and the emergence of locally produced histories of Mughal architecture and Indian architecture more generally. Paintings embodied new modes of viewership and cultural exchange as artists began to innovate upon established conventions of portraiture, allegory, and spatial representation and drew upon the multilingual literary and poetic milieu of this early modern period. A growing interaction with European society fueled a demand for Mughal subject matter catered to by entrepreneurial artists who were no longer strictly attached to court ateliers. This trend converged with a rise in new object economies that had a direct impact on visual culture in the modern period. Emergent visual technologies of print and photography spurred a rise in lithographed images, architectural views, portraits, and painted ivories. The symbolic pre-eminence of Mughal ideas held sway well into the nineteenth century, even though the Mughal court was no longer the sole venue of artistic production.

Monuments as Models: The Legacy of "Shahjahani" Architecture

In 1658, the Mughal prince Aurangzeb deposed his father Shah Jahan, ascended the throne, and styled himself ʿAlamgir (Seizer of the Universe). His reign (until 1707) was one of the longest of the empire, second only to that of Akbar. Yet this period and its importance for the history of Mughal visual culture remains largely unexamined. In part, this neglect results from foundational histories of Mughal art and architecture. Writing about Mughal architecture in 1876, James Fergusson proclaimed, “There are few things more startling in the history of this style than the rapid decline of taste that set in with the accession of Aurangzeb” (1876: 320). In art historical literature, Shah Jahan is rightly characterized as a great patron of art and architecture, sponsoring such impressive monuments as the Taj Mahal, the Mughal palace-fortresses at Agra and Delhi, and such lavish manuscripts as the famed “Windsor” *Padshahnama*, an illustrated chronicle of Shah Jahan’s reign. In contrast, ʿAlamgir is described as a religious fanatic who harbored anti-aesthetic attitudes, dismissed the royal painting atelier, and precipitated the dissolution of architectural culture, both during and beyond his reign. More recently, architectural historians have called for a re-assessment of this view (Asher 1992: 252–253; Dadlani 2009), and have successfully interpreted significant monuments from the reign of ʿAlamgir (Koch 2006a; Parodi 1998) as well as his successors (Asher 1993, 1994, 2002).

This period saw the continued imperial sponsorship of architecture, often modeled on monuments from the reign of Shah Jahan. Far from being statically derivative, these new buildings refashioned inherited visual codes, experimenting with scale, ornamental form, and regional building practices. For instance, Shah Jahan’s Friday mosque in Shahjahanabad (Delhi, 1650–1656), served as a model for the Badshahi mosque sponsored by ʿAlamgir in Lahore (1673–1674). The latter resembles the Delhi mosque in terms of form, material, and siting. Both are monumental courtyard mosques anchored on the qibla by a three-domed prayer hall; both feature the extensive use of red sandstone with domes of white marble; and both are located within Mughal capitals. But the Lahore example dramatizes monumental scale even more than its predecessor, resulting in one of the most monumental Friday mosques ever built.

ʿAlamgir also added a small “chapel mosque,” known as the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque), to the Mughal palace-fortress of Delhi, just as Shah Jahan had included one, referred to as the Nagina Masjid (Gem Mosque), in the palace-fortress of Agra. Embodying the trends of ʿAlamgir-sponsored projects, the Moti Masjid of Delhi conveyed a lavish sensibility (Figure 40.1). This was primarily effected through a rich ornamental program, one that responded to a visual language inherited from the Shah Jahan-sponsored Taj Mahal and Red Forts of Agra and Delhi. In these buildings, which eventually became models for successive generations, Mughal artists and architects developed an ornamental vocabulary of naturalistic floral and vegetal motifs, rendered in polychrome inlaid marble or *pietra dura* (in Persian, *parchin kari*). The ornamental code had specific symbolic associations, as it echoed metaphors from contemporary poetry and history in which such imagery symbolized paradise as well as the flourishing of Mughal kingship (Koch 2006b: 217–224).

In the Moti Masjid, these associations are reinforced and their visual expression further developed with greater sculptural dimensionality (Figure 40.2). The domes

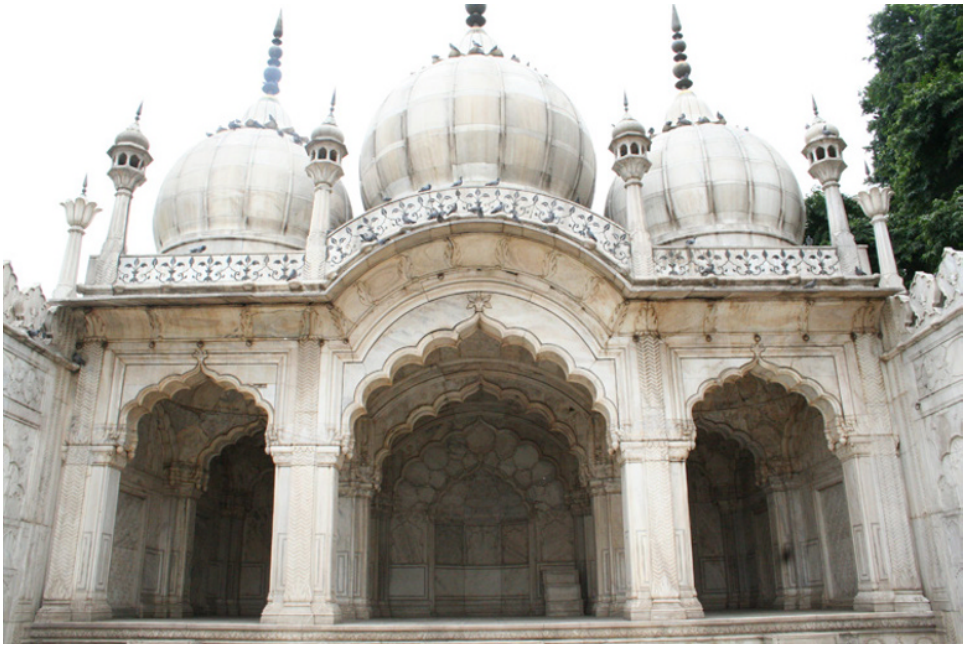

FIGURE 40.1 Moti Masjid, Delhi, *c.* 1659–1663. Source: Chanchal Dadlani.

of the mosque are each carved with a monumental flower, flower-filled vases bend in the pendentives of each dome, and the curves of the cusped arches are expressed as thick vines growing from buds at the capital of each pier. Perhaps the most evocative feature of the mosque is the minbar (pulpit), its steps resting atop a sinuous acanthus vine that manifests a tension between the organic and the artificial: the vegetal form is naturalistically rendered, yet manipulated into the perfectly symmetrical shape of the mosque's arches. The metaphorical themes of the visual vocabulary inherited from prior imperial monuments remained intact, but architects and sculptors experimented with the material expression of these themes, in this case foregoing the relative flatness of polychrome *pietra dura*, a hallmark of earlier projects, for the naturalism of more deeply sculpted forms in white marble.

Such building activity in the imperial centers, which ranged from staging the monumental (in the Badshahi Masjid) to experimenting with the ornamental (in the Moti Masjid), was matched by architectural endeavors in the Mughal provinces, most notably in the Deccani city of Aurangabad. As a result of ʿAlamgir's governance of the region and his expansion into south India, this area was the site of Mughal patronage, its legacy visible today in shrines, city walls and gateways, and most notably, the Bibi ka Maqbara (Figure 40.3) (Asher 1992: 261–265). Built for ʿAlamgir's wife Rabiʿa Daurani (1660–1661), the mausoleum enacts a dialogue with Mughal models and the local architecture of the Deccan region of

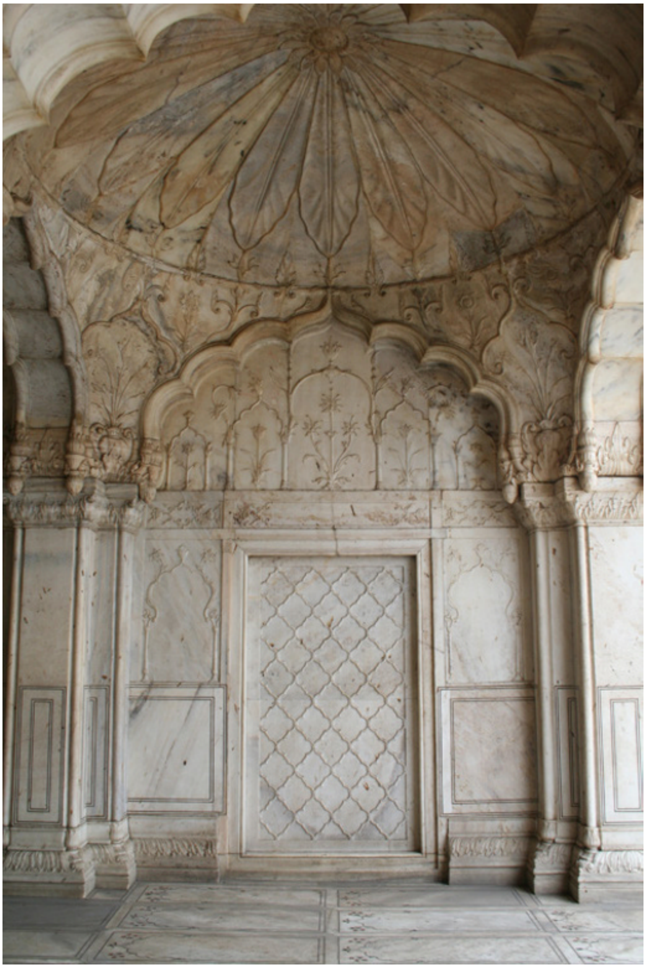

FIGURE 40.2 Interior, Moti Masjid, Delhi, *c*. 1659–1663. Source: Chanchal Dadlani.

south India in which it stands (see also Wagoner and Weinstein, CHAPTER 31). A white, domed building set atop a plinth and surrounded by four minarets, the tomb bears obvious similarities to the Taj Mahal, while particular architectonic elements, including chattris, baluster columns, and pishtaq (projecting) façades, further connect the building to Mughal architecture more generally. This incorporation of Mughal forms was likely facilitated by the architect, ʿAta Allah, who was the son of the architect of the Taj Mahal, Ustad Ahmad Lahori (Begley and Desai 1989: 266–275; Chaghtai 1937).

Yet the proportions of the Bibi ka Maqbara place it in dialogue with Deccani models: the manner in which the dome looms over the substructure and the minarets tower over the central edifice, and the resulting emphasis on verticality, reproduces the effect of buildings such as the Ibrahim Rauza (Bijapur, 1627) and the tomb of ʿAli Barid (Bidar, 1579) (Hutton 2006; Parodi 1998). Similarly, the

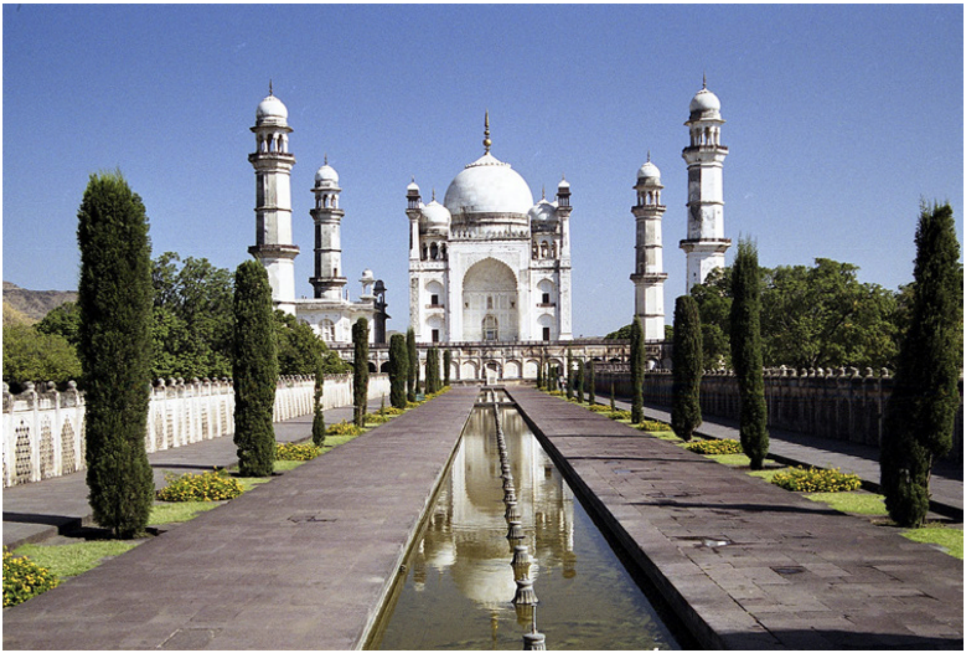

Figure 40.3 Bibi ka Maqbara, mausoleum of Rabiʿa Daurani, Aurangabad, 1660–1661. Source: Blain Auer.

ornament of the building combines Mughal and Deccani motifs. The façades are covered with floral motifs, from creeping vines to flower-filled vases, that draw directly from a Mughal ornamental vocabulary, while a Deccani-inspired palmette motif is also found throughout the building (Dadlani 2009: 83–96; Parodi 1998: 364). The building thus adapts the established conventions of imperial architecture, rendering it with local inflections. In its interpretation of Mughal models, the Bibi ka Maqbara is akin to the Badshahi Masjid of Lahore and the Moti Masjid of Delhi, but its adaptation drew upon the local styles and artistic practices of the Deccan.

After the death of ʿAlamgir in 1707, the empire grew increasingly decentralized, with regional states acquiring unprecedented levels of authority and autonomy. Yet Mughal symbolic authority remained potent, and the later successor states actively sought and contested the cultural legacy of the Mughal Empire. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the mausoleum of Safdar Jang (Delhi, 1753–1754) (Figure 40.4). Abuʾl Mansur Khan Safdar Jang (r. 1739–1753) was a vizier of the Mughal Empire as well as the *nawab* (governor) of Awadh, the province in northeastern India that grew from a Mughal territory into a semi-autonomous state over the course of the eighteenth century, ultimately declaring formal independence from Mughal control in 1815. His tomb is a three-level, domed mausoleum of red sandstone, white marble, and cream stucco, located in the center of a

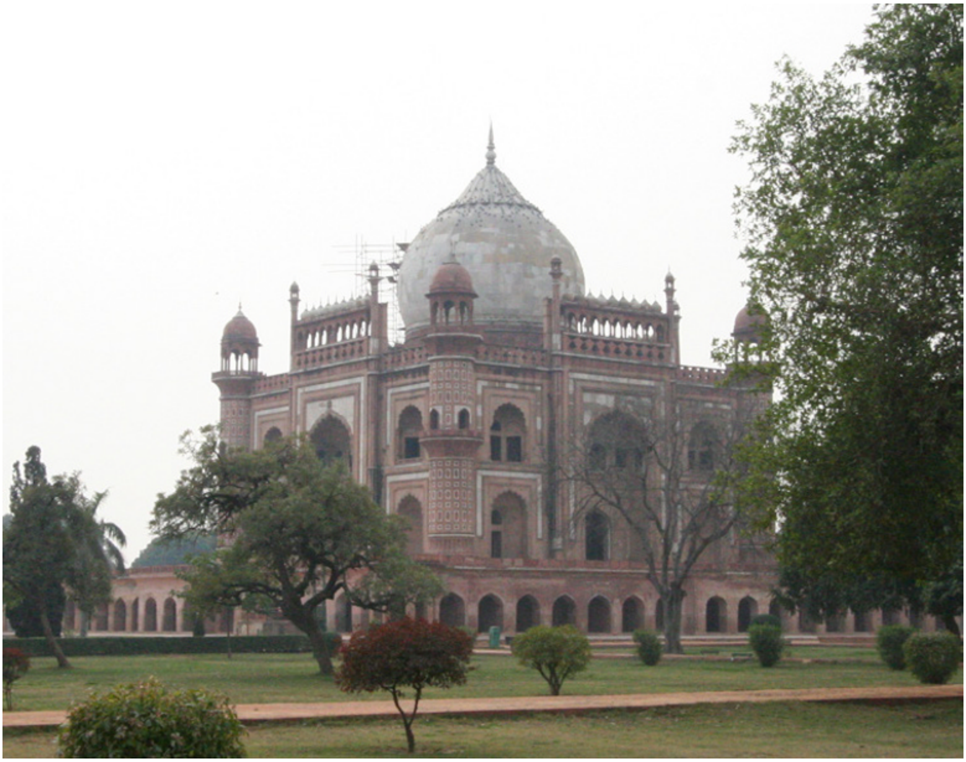

FIGURE 40.4 Mausoleum of Safdar Jang, Delhi, 1753–1754. Source: Chanchal Dadlani.

four-part garden (*chahar bagh*). In its monumentality, nine-fold plan (*hasht bihisht*), and garden setting, the tomb of Safdar Jang recalls the grand Mughal funerary complexes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see Golombek and Koch, CHAPTER 32). The fact that Safdar Jang's tomb came after a break in monumental tomb building makes it all the more striking, and suggests a self-conscious revival of a formerly imperial tradition as well as a desire to appropriate the imperial legacy encoded in this particular building type.

The tomb was part of a wider appropriation of Mughal visual codes that corresponded to Awadhi political ascendancy. Yet, like the examples discussed earlier, the Awadhi responses to Mughal models went hand in hand with the transformation of those models. In the case of the mausoleum of Safdar Jang, an exuberant ornamental program of interlacing floral and vine motifs cover the exterior and interior vaults of the structure, rendered with a dimensionality and animation that distinguishes it from earlier mausolea like the Taj Mahal and the Bibi ka Maqbara. While the expense or unavailability of marble might explain its absence here, the more salient point is that stucco afforded malleability and exciting sculptural possibilities, which Awadhi buildings take great advantage of (Keshani 2006; Llewellyn-Jones 2006; Tandon 2008). Over time, a heavily ornamented, stucco-accented architectural style emerged as characteristic of Awadhi visual identity. This style was used, for instance, in the tomb of Shujaʿ al-Daula (Faizabad, 1775) and the Bara Imambara complex of Asaf al-Daula (Lucknow, 1784–1791).

Other north Indian regional polities simultaneously referenced and transformed Mughal models in forging their own distinctive visual modes. For instance, the Rajput city of Jaipur (begun 1727) features forms that had come to be strongly associated with the seventeenth-century Mughals. These include pink-washed gated walls that recall the red sandstone walls of Mughal Agra and Delhi; the baluster columns and cusped arches in the arcades of its main avenues; and the multicolumned audience halls and *chahar bagh* gardens in the royal palace (Sachdev and Tillotson 2002: 51, 67; Tillotson 1987: 178–185). While Mughal–Rajput visual exchanges were hardly unprecedented (Asher 2002: 67–76; Tillotson 1987), this particular integration of symbolically charged Mughal forms was unusual in that it was part of a Jaipuri challenge to Mughal authority: the founder of the city, Sawai Jai Singh, built it at the moment when he was asserting independence from the Mughals (Sachdev and Tillotson 2002: 36–38).

Thus, in the eighteenth century, the Mughal visual codes that had been codified in the seventeenth century were transformed into a supradynastic idiom, associated with rulership and deployed by regional Indian entities to signal their authority as successors and sovereigns. The cases of Awadh and Jaipur point to a certain fluidity around the concept of Mughal architecture. On the one hand, "Awadhi" or "nawabi" (after the *nawabs*, or governors, of Awadh) might be a more accurate descriptor for the tomb of Safdar Jang. At the same time, the tomb laid claim to recognizably Mughal visual conventions. Not merely a question of nomenclature or categorization, this fluidity points to the dynamics of reinvention that were central to these eighteenth-century interpretations of Mughal cultural and visual legacies, and the transformation of monuments into models during this period of transition from early modernity to modernity.

Urban Culture

As Delhi was transformed into the sole seat of Mughal power during the eighteenth century, it underwent a reconfiguration and reconceptualization of urban space. Earlier, when the Mughal capital of Shahjahanabad had been founded in the seventeenth century, the urban order of the walled city centered around the imperial palace-fortress, the Red Fort (see Babaie and Kafescioğlu, CHAPTER 33). The two main boulevards in the city, Chandni Chowk and Faiz Bazaar, culminated in the Red Fort, and all subsidiary roads led into these two primary avenues. Access to the Red Fort and to specific zones in it was restricted. Thus the physical and symbolic experience of those who encountered the walled city was dominated by the Red Fort and the imperial presence that it signaled. Beginning in the early eighteenth century, the urban order of Mughal Delhi was reconfigured, with more highly trafficked and accessible spaces outside of the walled city becoming increasingly important in defining the urban experience, and with the spatial logic of the walled city undergoing transformations as well. Throughout the city, small-scale architectural projects were developed at crucial points in the urban fabric.

This shift is encapsulated in literary sources from the period. The *Muraqqaʿ-i Delhi* (Delhi Album) is a vivid travelogue by Dargah Quli Khan, a Deccani aristocrat who stayed in the city in the 1730s as part of the retinue of Nizam al-Mulk Asaf Jah I, the ruler of Hyderabad. In the literary trend of the day, the *Muraqqaʿ* celebrates the vibrant urban life of Delhi, including literary assemblies, dance performances, and religious festivals (Dadlani 2009: 156–174). One of the key types of urban spaces it emphasizes is the religious shrine: the narrative recounts events that take place at the two Qadam Sharif shrines housing footprints of the Prophet Muhammad as well as the dargahs (shrines) of the Sufi saints Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 1235), Nizam al-Din (d. 1325), and Chirag Delhi (d. 1356). He appears struck by the presence of crowds, the range of societal classes, and the sheer variety of activities that people engage in, remarking on those who partake in religious festivals as well as those who seem to visit shrines merely to enjoy their gardens or frequent adjacent bazaars. The tone of the text parallels that of the Indo-Persian *shahrashob* (city-disturber) mode of poetry, in which the city and urban life were richly described (Sharma 2004). This image differs markedly from that which emerges in earlier, seventeenth-century sources, which focused more exclusively on the ceremonial movements of the emperors rather than the collective vibrancy of urban space (Koch 1991a).

The spaces that grew increasingly important in eighteenth-century Mughal city life and in the urban imaginary, as revealed in poetry and travelogues, were the same spaces that were the focus of imperial patronage. This development signals a reversal of the earlier, seventeenth-century urban order, in which the physical and symbolic ordering of the city centered around the private sphere of the Red Fort. Given the emphasis on the myriad social activities within shrines, it is significant that two of them, the shrines of Bakhtiyar Kaki and Nizam al-Din, emerged as major centers of imperial Mughal patronage. Previously, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Mughal emperors had been interred in monumental mausolea set in large-scale gardens, the only exception being the tomb of the dynasty's founder Babur, an uncovered cenotaph set in a funerary garden in Kabul. Beginning in the eighteenth century, however, Mughal emperors were buried in marble-screened enclosures within the precincts of saints' shrines. By building their tombs at dargahs, Mughal emperors mapped their presence on to the most populated and visited areas of the city.

While this shift could have resulted from economic necessity or piety alike, in part it can be traced back to the first imperial burial of the century, that of ʿAlamgir. After his death in 1707, ʿAlamgir was laid to rest in Khuldabad, not far from Aurangabad in the Deccan, in the dargah of Burhan al-Din, a Sufi saint who had studied under the saint of Delhi, Nizam al-Din. ʿAlamgir's burial in the dargah has been interpreted in terms of his religious orthodoxy, since orthodox Islamic burial practice disallows the covering of a burial with a built structure (Koch 2006: 85–88). In following the new precedent set by ʿAlamgir, subsequent emperors underscored their association with the Chishti order of Sufi dervishes and allowed the dynasty to draw on their spiritual affiliations as a source of legitimacy (Ara 1977: 179–180; Asher 1992: 293). Soon thereafter, the emperor Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707–1712) was buried on a site adjacent to the dargah of the Chisti shaykh, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 1235) close to the Qutb mosque, the first Friday mosque of Delhi (1192 onwards), and over the course of the eighteenth century, subsequent Mughal emperors including Ahmad Shah (r. 1748–1753), Shah Alam II (r. 1759–1806), and Akbar Shah II (r. 1806–1837) would be interred beside him, attesting to the ongoing importance of the site. The shrine also received additional imperial patronage from Farrukhsiyar (r. 1713–1719), in the form of gateways and a marble screen enclosing the grave of Bakhtiyar Kaki. At the shrine of the Chisti shaykh Nizam al-Din (d. 1325) farther north, Muhammad Shah (r. 1719–1748) was interred in a similar fashion.

In keeping with the emphasis on urban spaces that decentered the Red Fort, the early 1700s saw the multiplication of small, triple-domed mosques in areas north and south of the walled city of Shahjahanabad, on its main thoroughfares, Chandni Chowk and Faiz Bazaar, and on some of the subsidiary roads of Shahjahanabad as well. Signaling urban growth, these mosques formed the nuclei of newly important neighborhoods, sometimes built to augment existing shrines, and other times in conjunction with new commercial zones. One of the best-preserved examples, the Fakhr al-Masajid (Pride of the Mosques, 1728–1729), was built in northern Shahjahanabad, near the city's Kashmiri gate, and included a small complex of shops. Its patron was Fakhr al-Nisa, the widow of Shujaʿat Khan, a noble who had served ʿAlamgir (Stephen 1876: 270–271).

Indeed, many of these new structures point to the destabilization of the patronage system, which had previously been dominated by the imperial family. The patrons of these new mosques included royal women and male and female members of the nobility alike, indicating the increasing strength of this class of patrons. While "subimperial" patronage was not new (Asher 1992), its increase in the eighteenth century paralleled the growing importance accorded to public space, both in the experience and portrayal of the Mughal city.

Late Mughal Painting and Muhammad Shah

The paintings from this period also convey the extent to which conventions of Mughal art were reformulated within and outside the Mughal courtly sphere. Mughal court culture under Muhammad Shah is characterized by a remarkable ebullience centered on the persona of the emperor as political pawn, connoisseur, and protagonist. The second half of the eighteenth century saw Mughal provinces emerge as centers of artistic production in their own right, including Awadh in northwestern India and Murshidabad in Bengal. Mughal authority continued to be bolstered through court paintings that reached an especially creative phase through a blend of conventions of different genres. The increase in European patronage promoted a rise in demand for copies of Mughal works, while the growth of private collecting created diversified channels of artistic production. The rise of Company Bahadur, or the British East India Company, in competition with Mughal and Nawabi regimes of artistic production, further complicates any singular vision of "Mughal" art in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In 1719, Muhammad Shah assumed the mantle of Mughal dynastic rule at the age of 17, overcoming the domineering influence of the infamous kingmaker duo, the Sayyid Barha brothers, both high-ranking officials who had risen to power during the decade of instability following the death of ʿAlamgir in 1707 (Malik 1977: 31–38, 56–115) These years had seen a number of power struggles within the Mughal camp, including the short reigns of Bahadur Shah I and Farrukhsiyar. This period of swift reversals of political fortunes elicited an expedient response from Delhi painters who sketched their patrons within intimate *darbar* (audience) settings, opting for more private ceremonial images than grand gestures of visual opulence. The work of painters such as Bhavanidas (at the Mughal court *c.* 1700–1719), who painted for ʿAlamgir, Bahadur Shah I, and Farrukhsiyar, represents the phase of the development of a decorative palette and greater refinement within figural representation (Dalrymple and Sharma 2012: 1–13). Artistic mobility was also facilitated by familial ties between the houses of the Mughals and Rajputs, as was the case for Bhavanidas who relocated to the Rajput kingdom of Kishangarh following the death in 1712 of his patron, the emperor Bahadur Shah, who had married the aunt of the Kishangarh ruler, Raj Singh (1706–1748) (Haider *et al.* 2011). The region of Kishangarh became another central player in the literary and cultural exchanges between the Deccan, Delhi, and Rajasthan, especially during the patronage of its ruler Savant Singh (r. 1748–1764), who was also a prolific poet and used the alias Nagaridas, partaking in the cosmopolitan milieu of Urdu literary activity underway in Mughal circles (Pauwels 2012: 61–85).

Muhammad Shah's path to imperial succession was a treacherous one, but his reign spanning nearly three decades was to have a profound impact on developments within and outside the Mughal court. This period saw the consolidation of the imperial atelier during the first half of Muhammad Shah's reign, and also its dramatic fragmentation after 1739 when the Iranian Afsharid ruler Nadir Shah (r. 1736–1747) attacked Delhi, causing the Mughal emperor to capitulate territories and turn over a vast amount of material wealth from the imperial treasury (Babaie 2017). The carting off of the most visible emblems of Mughal imperial clout, the Peacock Throne and the Kuh-i-nur diamond, also signaled a loss of cultural prestige, one that later rulers would actively seek to revive (Sharma 2013: 44–87). Even so, the early part of Muhammad Shah's reign yielded a characteristically unique visual expression that projected the popular persona of the ruler as "Rangila," a pleasure-loving sovereign.

It is in this period that we see the emergence of a sort of politics of pleasure – where Mughal courtly life appears to have been the primary means of expressing Mughal authority, but also where pleasure in itself became a signpost of Mughal self-expression. The visual projection of Muhammad Shah's sobriquet "Rangila," forms an overarching theme within court paintings from this period. The emperor's hedonist persona preoccupied painters, who specifically focused on the king's body and deportment. The emperor was usually depicted in a ladies' *peshwaz*, wearing shoes embroidered with pearls, his eyes upturned with *surma* (kohl) indulging in recreational activities and courtly entertainments. Muhammad Shah's embodiment of the persona of the "nayaka" or archetypal lover-king in painting referenced the imaginative coalescing of literary tastes where Braj Bhasha poetics fed into a multifaceted "fresh" Indo-Persian literary culture (Busch 2010; Busch 2011: 149–151; Kinra 2011: 12–39; Koch 2010; Truschke 2012). A potent rendition of Muhammad Shah as ideal lover exemplifying the amorous (*Shringara*) mode is offered in the painting *Muhammad Shah Making Love* from *c.* 1735, which was created by the painter Kalyan Das "Chitarman," who was born into a family in royal service (Crill and Jariwala 2010: 108–109). In a departure from conventions of Mughal portraiture, Chitarman projects the emperor as a puissant lover vested with charged eroticism. Muhammad Shah is also personified as the flirtatious lover-king Krishna recalling paintings illustrating musical modes of Indian music, which were a popular genre in courtly painting. In this scene associated with the Spring melody (Vasanta raga) painted by Bhupal Singh (active 1730–1738) the emperor is shown engaging in the revelries of Holi, the spring festival celebrated by throwing colored powders (Figure 40.5). Unlike an earlier seventeenth-century precedent from the Chester Beatty Library showing the Mughal emperor Jahangir approaching Holi celebrations at the court, Muhammad Shah is noticeably devoid of his imperial halo as he engages in playful revelry and is very much at the center of festivities.[1] The painting's parallel with a slightly earlier and grander composition created for the ruler Bakhat Singh (1706–1752) in his court at Nagaur in Rajasthan suggests the continued popularity of this theme, and the consistent artistic flows between Muhammad Shah's Delhi and Jodhpur in Rajasthan during the eighteenth century (Diamond and Glynn 2008: 75–76, 269). Indeed, the use of the term *dilli kalam* (Delhi brush or Delhi way of painting) an approximation of the word "style," in the courts at Mewar in Rajasthan indicates that the stylistic conventions of Mughal court painting (despite their own contingencies) were considered distinct and often emulated by painters who wished to access its particular techniques or modalities (Aitken 2010: 50, 71).

This marked change of visualizing pleasure as a formative component of imperial portraiture pervaded the most formal subjects within painting – the quintessential *jharoka* (window) portrait of the emperor, a signature image of Mughal kingship and self-expression. The addition of the *huqqa* pipe to some contemporary official Mughal portraits marks a departure from earlier conventions implying the

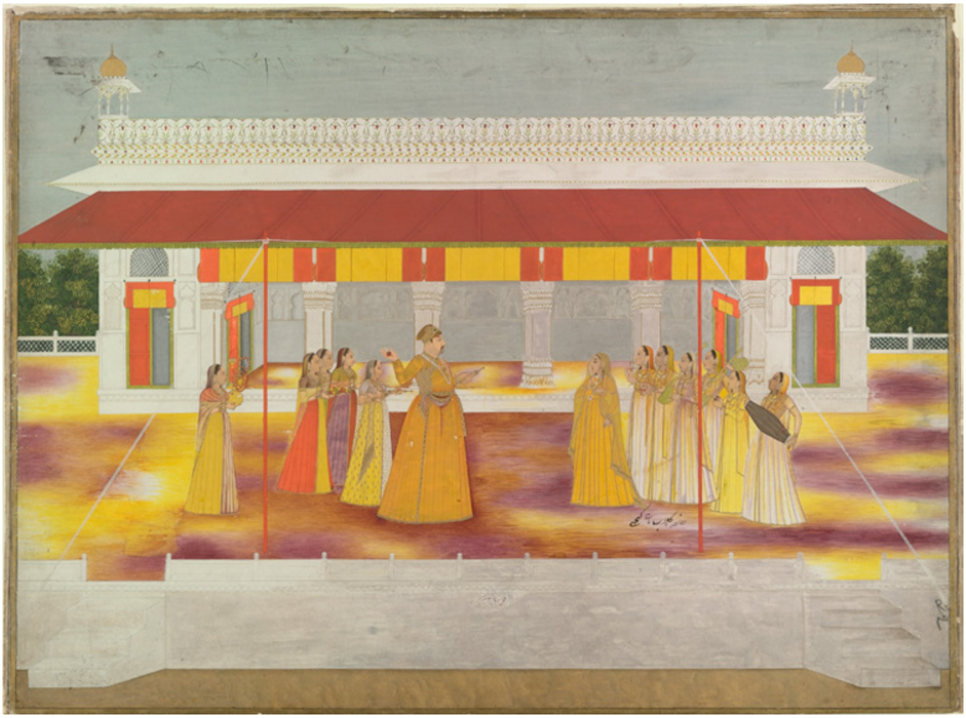

FIGURE 40.5 *Muhammad Shah Celebrating Holi*, Bhupal Singh, *c.* 1737, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS Douce Or. b.3, no. 22. Reproduced with permission.

merging of the emperor's private and public realms (Parodi 2012: 90–95). Muhammad Shah's reign also marked the popularization of scenes of leisure, featuring the *huqqa* as a central marker of refined taste, an idea that was popularized in the Deccani courts of south India especially since the time of Akbar (Pinder-Wilson 1962: 91–94). According to the inscription on a seventeenth-century glass *huqqa* bottle, "Even if live charcoal is placed on its head; The *huqqa*, a teacher of etiquette, will not respond unless drawn upon; Thus one can learn from its manners of refinement."[2] This legacy of the *huqqa* as an attribute of refinement can be fully witnessed in the numerous outdoor leisure scenes created by migrant Delhi artists for Company officers, nobles, and for regional courts in various Mughal provincial centers.[3]

The framework of courtly leisure should be viewed in the context of a wider milieu of expressive culture at the Mughal court. Muhammad Shah's Delhi was the site of a confluence of poets such as Mir Taqi Mir (1723–1810), theologians, musicians, dancers, and painters as well as over 20 scholars and mystics including the likes of Shah Waliullah (1702–1762) and Khvaja Mir Dard (1721–1785). Court musicians such as Na'mat Khan (active 1707–1740), who innovated upon musical genres such as the *khayal* style (Hindustani art music designed to show off the vocal virtuosity), also imparted instruction to the women of the Mughal house and were part of large musical assemblies in the city and the Mughal court (Brown 2003; Miner 1993: 86–88). This is an important context for understanding the creation of a large number of paintings of musical gatherings showing the emperor with court performers. Na'mat Khan is thought to have composed musical elegies with specific references to the emperor Muhammad Shah as "Rangila" probably under the pen name "Sadarang" (ever-creative) (Joshi 1997; Miner 1993: 88). In Persian and Sanskrit, respectively, "rang" and "ranga" denote color, implying the act of coloring or dyeing, redness, passion, the joy of delight, or even the appreciation of beauty. Thus, in its fullest sense the term "rang" plays upon a multireferential idea of artistic virtuosity as well as connoisseurship. It is very much the conceptual frame that allowed the artist/performer to create an atmosphere of mutual affinity with their patron akin to a devotional reverence for a supreme being. In fact, Muhammad Shah's personal interest in the poetics of love and pleasure is evident in the illustrated manuscript, the *Karnama-i ʿishq* (Book of the Affairs of Love) written by the court notable Anand Ram Mukhlis (*c.* 1697–1750) and illustrated by the court painter Govardhan II (*c.* 1730–1745) (McInerney 2002: 12–33). The manuscript's 38 illustrations chart the story of Prince Gauhar and Princess Malika-i Zamani with some of the illustrations directly based on other court paintings (Losty 1982: 133; Roy 2012: 17–23). The colophon marks the text's completion in 1735 and its presentation to the emperor in 1739, on the eve of Nadir Shah's plunder of Delhi.[4]

The Visual Culture of the Itinerant Mughal Court

With Muhammad Shah's death in 1748 and the recurrent political disruptions of the 1760s resulting from Afghan raids, the migration of court artists to nearby provinces such as Awadh and Murshidabad dispersed the visual culture of the Mughal court to these newer regional centers (Markel and Gude 2010). The exile of Mughal princes to neighboring regions created a political vacuum at Delhi, this phase marking the diversification of artistic practices in response to varied demands of a new class of European and Indian patrons. Mughal ideas continued to have a symbolic pre-eminence. In 1759, Prince ʿAli Gauhar declared his ascendancy to the Mughal throne assuming the title of Shah ʿAlam II, but it was only in 1771 that he was able to conduct a famous *bazgasht* (return) to Delhi with the help of Maratha allies who had gained much political clout in this period (Y. Sharma 2012a: 111–112). By this time, the East India Company had brokered control of most of the Mughal territories affecting a dramatic shift in the balance of power in the subcontinent. With the greater Delhi region being the sole Mughal outpost in the late eighteenth century, Shah ʿAlam's return renewed Delhi's status as the Mughal seat of power and brought about a resurgence of artistic activity in the city.

Much of the visualization of the itinerant Mughal court prior to 1771 comes from paintings executed in Awadh, in particular, those made for the French officer Jean-Baptiste Gentil (1726–1799), who was a special agent to the *nawab* of Awadh, Shujaʿ al-Daula (r. 1753–1775). The re-employment of artists as map-makers and topographical painters by Gentil, as well as his engagement with Indian and eastern Islamic modes of architectural representation, marked a shift from conventional styles of painting and also indexed the rise of census maps and architectural documentation as popular genres in their own right (Dadlani 2011; Y. Sharma 2012a). Following this, the view of the Red Fort of Delhi assumed much importance, as it was the last Mughal stronghold (Y. Sharma, 2012a: 132–135). In addition, an album commissioned by Gentil attests to the fluidity between the Mughal and Awadhi courts during this transitional period.[5] Its folios include rare documentation of Shah ʿAlam's life as a guest of the *nawab*. One of the principal artists of the album, Mohan Singh, who signed himself as "valad-i govardhan" (son of Govardhan) elsewhere, was the son of the Delhi painter Govardhan II and likely migrated to Awadh with his father in the 1760s.[6]

Shah ʿAlam's reinstatement at Delhi in 1771 subsequently attracted Awadhi officials and artists to the Mughal court as it regained cultural strength. Following the death of Shujaʿ al-Daula in 1775, Gentil's friend, the Swiss officer Antoine Louis Henri Polier (1741–1795), sought employment with Shah ʿAlam. He is known to have requisitioned his *chef d'atelier*, the painter Mihr Chand (active 1740–1780), to join him in Delhi. Polier's personal correspondence from 1776 shows that Mihr Chand was asked to come to Delhi from Awadh along with two other painters and one *naqqash* (painter–decorator) and to bring along a number of albums and manuscripts as well as many Persian books (Alam and Alavi 2001: 326–327, 348). Mihr Chand's arrival in Delhi would have caused a stir with Delhi artists being given access to a range of works prepared in Awadh. Polier returned to Awadh in 1780, but his stay in Delhi would have undoubtedly re-energized the Mughal atelier.

The turn of the century saw the re-establishment of the Mughal atelier at Delhi headed by the painters Khairullah (active *c.* 1800–1815) and Ghulam Murtaza Khan (active 1809–1830), who worked in a close-knit stylistic mode that aimed at drawing the aura of a glorious Mughal past into the present (Y. Sharma 2013: 44–87). Their works centered on the figure of the blind emperor seated on a resplendent Peacock Throne. The paintings played upon the metaphorical significance of the throne, modeling the painted version on the "original," which had been carried off to Iran by Nadir Shah in 1739, while also making key additions to its design (Y. Sharma 2013: 56–59). Its architectural design was based on the marble *jharoka* throne in the Diwan-i Khass (Hall of Private Audiences) at the Red Fort, and from the elevation of the upper gallery of the baldachin of the Machchhi Bhawan at Agra Fort – all quintessential elements of Mughal architecture (Koch 1991b). The paintings also projected Shah ʿAlam's virtuosity as a poet and pious king and were invested with the symbolism invoking the emotive context of Indo-Persian and Braj Bhasha poetics that constituted the wider expressive culture of this period (Y. Sharma 2013: 44–87).

Meanwhile, the Mughal–Maratha alliance ruling Delhi seems to have tenuously held together in opposition to the East India Company, at least until the 1800s. As a number of Mughal paintings collected by the Maratha minister Nana Phadnavis (1742–1800) indicate, the Marathas were fascinated with Mughal subjects. The remarkable aspect of Nana's album is that it was assembled using folios from imperial albums dating back to the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, which were then remounted and combined with other folios from Muhammad Shah's reign (Dalrymple and Sharma 2012: 6, 76). In essence, the process of reuse and assemblage was fundamental to the *muraqqaʿ* (album); however, its folios suggest a process of gradual, and at times surreptitious, dispersal of prized Mughal manuscripts from the imperial library. In 1790, when the British Governor General Warren Hastings wrote to Shah ʿAlam for permission to transcribe his copy of the Hindu epic, *Mahabharata*, he was told that "his (Shah ʿAlam's) library had been totally plundered and destroyed by that villain Ghullam Khauder Khan (Ghulam Qadir)" and that "part of the books had been purchased at Lucknow, that is by the Vizier Asaf al-Daula."[7] The reference is to the ignominious events of 1788, when Shah ʿAlam had been attacked and blinded by a Ghulam Qadir, a Rohilla Afghan chief raged an onslaught on the Mughal houses. The Marathas acting on behalf of the emperor soon silenced Qadir and a blind Shah ʿAlam was reinstated upon the throne of Delhi, but the plunder of the royal treasury and imperial library led to many works ending up on the open market. Hastings confirmed that Asaf al-Daula had "produced some of them [albums] to the English Gentlemen, boasting that they were the King's."[8] Among the works, Hastings noted, were also two beautifully painted and illuminated volumes for which the ruler of Awadh had paid 10 000 rupees. It is likely that one of the albums acquired by Asaf al-Daula was the *Padshahnama*, the imperial album produced for Shah Jahan, which was presented by the *nawab* to King George III in 1799 and now resides in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle (Beach and Koch 1997). The visual legacy of Shah Jahan-era painting, especially the *Padshahnama*, inspired a generation of painters in the nineteenth century.

The Nineteenth Century: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

In 1803, the British formally annexed Delhi after a period of prolonged contestation with the Maratha chiefs, heralding the start of British administration in the city. Until the downfall of the empire in 1858, the Mughal emperors would remain on the throne and occupy the Red Fort in Delhi. Yet they were officially under the jurisdiction of the East India Company. During this period, Mughal resistance was articulated in the celebration, revival, and refashioning of earlier forms seen, for instance, in the re-establishment of Mughal patronage of court painting and architecture. Simultaneously, British artistic patronage grew dramatically. The results were Mughal and British-sponsored ethnographic and topographical compendia, portraits, genealogies, and dynastic histories.

One of the most significant Mughal architectural projects of the period is the Zafar Mahal palace in Mehrauli, begun under Akbar Shah II but renovated by the last emperor, Bahadur Shah "Zafar" (r. 1837–1858). With its red sandstone and white marble façade, monumental gateway featuring a central pointed arch and two side towers, and use of Mughal visual motifs including chattris, baluster columns and floral ornament, the palace exhibits clear visual associations with the Mughal past. These formal choices distinguish the Zafar Mahal from contemporary buildings. At a time when most of the monumental architecture on the subcontinent was being built by British architects working in a Neoclassical style, or developing what was to become the Indo-Saracenic style (Metcalf 1989), the Zafar Mahal constitutes a conscious revivalism of earlier Mughal palace architecture, seen in the imperial Red Forts of Agra, Delhi, and Lahore. Moreover, the siting of the palace speaks to the alterations in the Mughal socioreligious order, for it adjoined the dargah of Bakhtiyar Kaki, the aforementioned Sufi shrine that had been the center of active Mughal patronage throughout the eighteenth century.

Even the urban image of Delhi itself was drawn into Mughal and British historical discourses. For instance, in 1815, Akbar Shah presented a British official, J.T. Roberdean, with two lavishly illustrated histories of the life of Shah Jahan, including the *ʿAmal-i Salih*, written by Shah Jahan's court historian Muhammad Salih Kanbo. Among the formal portraits, court scenes, and battles that comprised the standard repertoire of imperial Mughal manuscript painting, were included several folios devoted to unprecedented architectural views (Losty 1982: 134). The latter included the gateways and audience halls of the Red Fort and the Delhi congregational mosque, the very spaces Akbar Shah now occupied and that functioned as symbolic settings for the performance of Mughal authority.

This Janus-faced approach, in which the Mughals looked to their own past while addressing their present, was also emphasized in the *darbar* scenes of Akbar Shah II. Painters relaxed their emphasis on flatness and two-dimensionality, focusing on techniques for modulating vision and pictorial space. The painting, *Akbar II in Formal Darbar with the British Resident Charles Metcalfe in Attendance* by the court painter Ghulam Murtaza Khan around 1809–1810, is the first known portrayal of Mughal–East India Company courtly interaction that set the blueprint for later court scenes in Delhi showing successive British Residents (Dalrymple and Sharma 2012: 108–109). The composition is bilateral, with the figure of the emperor seated on the recreated Peacock Throne forming an apex over a pyramidal assembly of courtiers who are seen leaning on staffs, much like the court scenes of the earlier *Padshahnama* (Figure 45.6) The three-quarter stance of the emperor making full eye contact with the viewer, however, was a

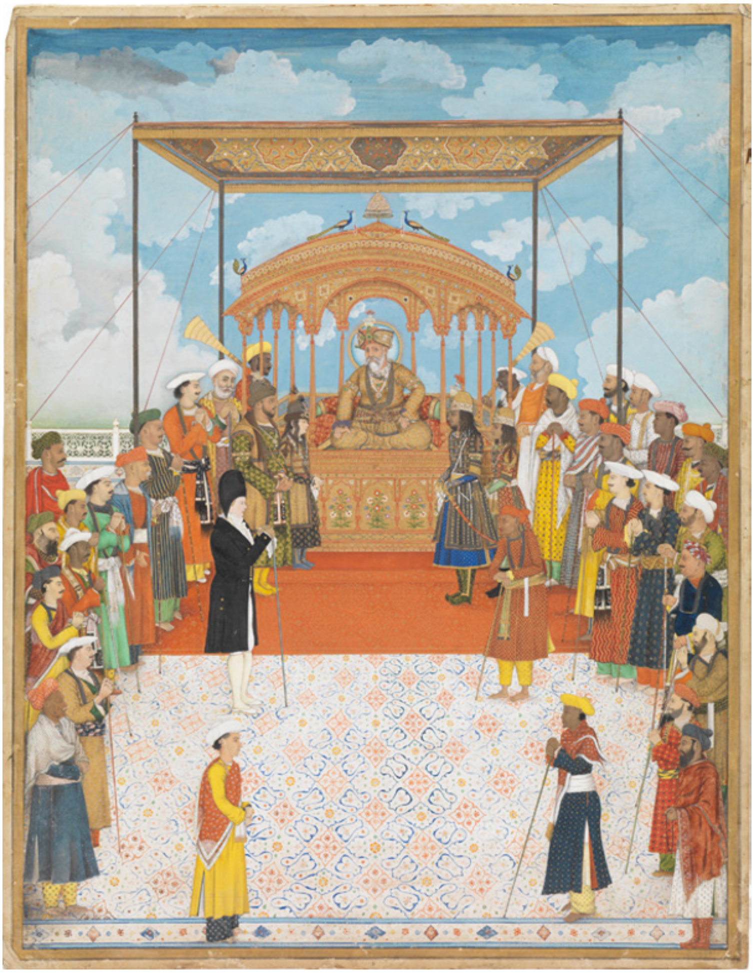

FIGURE 40.6 *Akbar II in Darbar with the British Resident Charles Metcalfe in Attendance*, attr. Ghulam Murtaza Khan, *c.* 1810–1811, Cincinnati Art Museum, The William and Louise Taft Semple Collection, 1962.458. Reproduced with permission.

novelty within Mughal portraiture for this period, his outward looking gaze creating an uncanny moment of self-awareness (Losty 1998: 24; Losty and Leach 1998). The ocular politics of the composition, involving the viewer and the viewed, along with its play on the symbolism of courtly demeanor served to privilege the Mughal emperor's position vis-à-vis the Resident's, preserving the air of haute ceremonial (Minissale 2007: 40–49; Necipoğlu 1993).

Nineteenth-century Mughal visual culture also intersected with wider cultural activity outside the purview of the court. In this period, the popularity of the lyrical *ghazal* and *qasida* (panegyric) forms in Urdu poetry reached a new zenith under poets such as Zauq (1789–1854), Mumin (1800–1851), and Ghalib (1797–1869).

With the formal transformation of the Ghaziuddin madrasa (founded 1792) into the Delhi College in 1825, its literary, theological and poetic heritage was now disseminated through the channels of policies of social edification (Minault 1999). The city's fast-growing *nouveau riche* – European officers, regional chiefs and agents, bankers and merchants – provided an alternative source of income for Delhi-based poets, painters, dancers, and musicians. Delhi painters worked in smaller family-based ateliers; Ghulam Murtaza Khan's family produced three generations of painters, especially the multifaceted painter Ghulam ʿAli Khan (active *c.* 1815–1855), who shaped the course of painting in the later Mughal period.

Ghulam ʿAli Khan's practice is paradigmatic of Delhi's visual culture in the nineteenth century. He was one of the finest painters of this period, whose career spanned over four decades. He worked for the Mughal court, new elites of Delhi such as the East India Company officer William Fraser (1784–1835), and the Anglo-Rajput cavalryman James Skinner (1778–1841), as well as for the neighboring Jat and Rajput courts at Jhajjar, Dujana, and Alwar (Y. Sharma 2012b: 41–52; Sharma 2013: 153–194, 214–240). A manuscript copy of Saʿdi's *Gulistan* commissioned by the Alwar Raja Banni Singh (1806–1857) was one of the principal commissions executed outside the purview of the Mughal court, employing Delhi artists, calligraphers, and bookbinders over a 12-year period. Ghulam ʿAli Khan's stay at Alwar between 1840 and 1849 and his supervision of the *Gulistan* created yet another avenue for the perpetuation of Mughal ideas in the regional courts, shaping the course of Alwar court painting in the mid-nineteenth century (Y. Sharma 2012b: 41–52).

Ghulam ʿAli Khan's wide-reaching practice created a steady cross-flow of ideas between the court and the public sphere leading to a gradual dilution of conventions. He painted portraits of both Akbar Shah and his son Zafar that dispensed with the formal hieratic poses of Mughal portraiture adhered to by his predecessors. Instead, the painter imparted an easy familiarity to the Mughal royal image, building on his experience of working for William Fraser between 1815 and 1820 and Skinner between 1825 and 1828. While the painter sometimes signed himself as "His Majesty's Painter" and "A hereditary slave [to the dynasty]," Ghulam ʿAli Khan most frequently distinguished himself as the "resident of the Seat of Empire Shahjahanabad (Delhi)" suggesting his deep attachment to the city (Y. Sharma 2012b: 44–45; Soudavar 1992: 358–359). His spiritual and personal association with Mughal Delhi is also confirmed in his signature as "*mulazim huzur-i vala*" (employee of the exalted presence) in a view of the Qutb Minar mosque complex (1192 and later) painted in the early nineteenth century when the painter produced numerous topographical views of Delhi. His emphasis on the labeling of Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki's tomb, the site of the burial of later Mughal emperors, including Shah ʿAlam II, privileges the site's spiritual significance (Figure 40.7) (Y. Sharma 2013: 162–164).

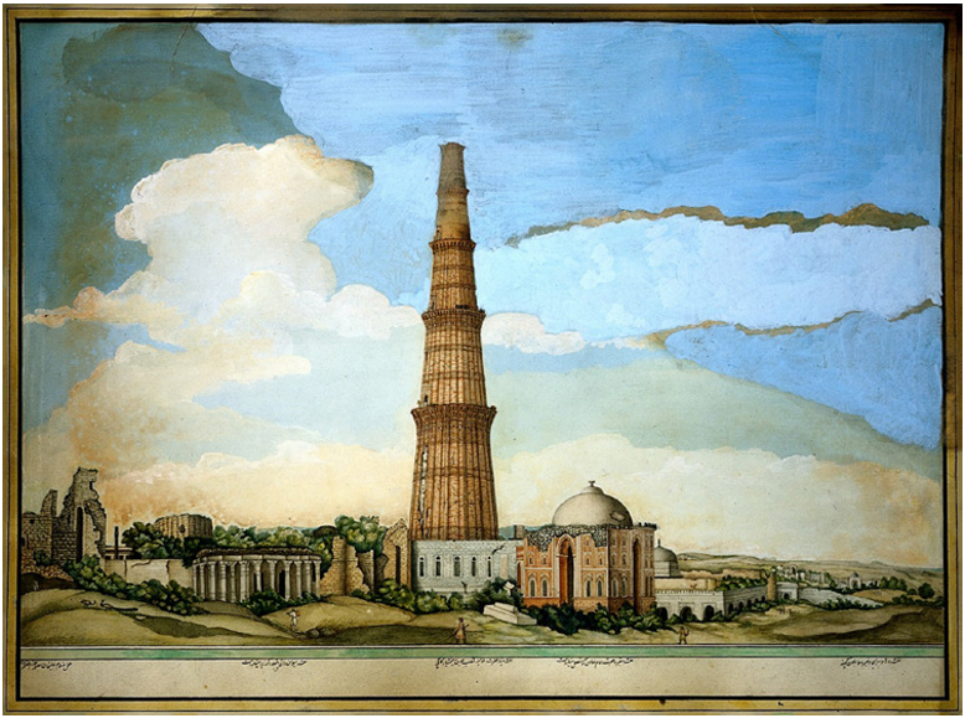

FIGURE 40.7 *View of the Qutub Minar*, *c.* 1815–1820, Ghulam ʻAli Khan. Wellcome Library no. 579943i.

In the non-courtly sphere, a private market for Mughal works flourished with local artists regularly commissioned to paint or transcribe copies of seventeenth-century works. The collecting habits of the city's European residents, who commissioned Delhi painters and scribes to create illustrated manuscripts and bespoke albums, created an alternative avenue for artistic production. The artists, meanwhile, continued to subscribe to the literary traditions of Mughal India, especially the genre of *tazkira* (biographical dictionary). Works such as the *Tashrih al-aqvam* (Concise Account of Peoples) and *Tazkirat al-umara* (Biography of Nobles), commissioned by James Skinner, are examples of new kinds of illustrated compendia that brought together topography, biography, and ethnography (S. Sharma 2012b: 33–40). In these literary works, partly based on earlier Persianate models of verse and prose, "the aesthetics of representation were embedded in the object of the gaze of the artist and the long history of focusing on certain social types that was part of the memory of people," a phenomenon seen in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works such as the *Aʿin-i Akbari* (Institutes of Akbar) and descriptive accounts such as the *Tarikh-i Alfi* (History of the Millennium, 1592) and *Khulasat-i Tavarikh* (Summary of History, 1696) (S. Sharma 2012a: 17–36, 30–33). The textual character of such compendia produced in the late Mughal period also began to anticipate the routinization and serialization seen in colonial censuses and gazetteers of the late nineteenth century (Hermansen and Lawrence 2000: 166).

The combination of the biographical dictionary and the topographical survey marks another important milestone in the visual culture of this period. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's (1817–1898) *Asar al-Sanadid* (Vestiges of the Past), written in 1847 and dedicated to the British Resident Thomas Metcalfe (1795–1853), captures a transitional moment, from painting to print making. Its pioneering lithographed publication included more than 130 woodcut illustrations of buildings and sites by the Delhi artists Faiz ʿAli Khan (active 1840s) and Mirza Shahrukh Beg (active 1845–1855), both part of Ghulam ʿAli Khan's family atelier (Y. Sharma 2013: 175–178). Based partly on the painter Mazhar ʿAli Khan's illustrations in Thomas Metcalfe's own memoir of Delhi, *Reminiscences of imperial Delhie*, completed in 1844, the illustrations offered a comprehensive look into the city's urban geography and architecture (Losty 2012: 53–60). Through an emphasis on "the buildings in and around Shahjahanabad, the Red Fort, and about the people of the city and their ways" the book celebrated the urban character of Delhi and its pre-Mughal and Mughal legacy (Naim 2010: 4). The book was produced in two editions each emphasizing two distinct yet complementary traditions. The first edition was based on the *tazkira* convention, illustrating the practice of urban biography that flourished in the Indo-Persian literary tradition. The later edition of the book from 1847 was markedly different in that it abandoned the *tazkira* format in favor of an architectural and urban topographical survey modality that was driven by British patronage and consumption, resulting from a new interest in recording Delhi's archaeology and urban history (Lelyveld 2011; Naim 2010; Troll 1972). Such texts and survey drawings commissioned for the Delhi Archaeological Society (later Archaeological Survey of India) now targeted a more popular audience.

The emperor Zafar's own preoccupation with recording the history of the Mughal house, especially in the last years of his reign, between 1850 and 1857, resulted in the production of numerous dynastic histories and albums. Zafar commissioned the famous court poet Ghalib to pen a two-part history of the Mughal dynasty, of which the poet could only publish the first half, entitled *Mihr-i Nimroz* (The Midday Sun, 1854) (Russell and Islam 1994: 72–75). Another notable commission, *Mir'at us-Salatin* (Mirror of Kings, *c.* 1850, lithographed copy, British Library, Or.182) supervised by Zafar's primary aide, Hakim Ahsanullah Khan, and illustrated by Ghulam ʿAli Khan and Babar ʿAli Khan (a possible relative) was commissioned to commemorate the thirteenth year of Zafar's reign. This album's scope lay beyond the genealogy of the house of Timur, instead focusing on the history of Delhi's imperial occupation. With the addition of portraits of Sher Shah (r. 1540–1545), Nadir Shah (r. 1736–1747), and Ahmad Shah Durrani (r. 1747–1772), all of whom had attacked Mughal rulers at Delhi, this album highlighted not only Mughal resilience in the face of adversity but also the significance of Delhi as a physical marker of late Mughal identity.

While many examples of dynastic genealogies sponsored by Zafar's trusted minister and physician Ahsanullah Khan exist, their expedient nature and relatively low quality indicates that such genealogical albums were becoming popular in the bazaar circuits of Delhi and may have been quickly turned around for patrons on demand. This was coupled with the rising popularity of painted ivories, which became another medium for the propagation of Mughal dynastic portraits. Portraits of Mughal emperors were paired with idealized portraits of their wives, the latter derived from stock models that were used interchangeably. With the growing demand for painted ivories, Mughal visual culture experienced a surge far beyond the urban perimeter of Delhi. Miniature paintings on ivory, often modeled on painted scenes, appealed to the Anglo-Indian population of Delhi, especially in the form of souvenirs mounted in portable and haptic settings such as bracelets, lockets, and brooches. Though paintings on paper continued to be commissioned, court painters were drawn into the commercial sphere of painted ivories. The advent of print and photography in the late Mughal period created an alternative source of income for Delhi painters who diversified their practice to work for the souvenir market signaling the endorsement of new visual technologies.

The Mughal Empire drew to a close in 1858 with Delhi facing a final onslaught as a result of a widespread uprising in parts of northern India, eliciting a devastating British response, resulting in the formal annexation of Indian territories to the British crown. Zafar's last years were spent in captivity, the final surviving record of which is a photograph showing the deposed emperor smoking a *huqqa* taken in May 1858 by the British photographers Robert Tytler (active 1858–1872) and Charles Shepherd (active 1858–1878) (Figure 40.8). It presents the last Mughal emperor devoid of the accouterments of court and ceremonial, in plain clothes and without his crown, his only solace a *huqqa* pipe lingering in the foreground, an echo of the conventions of eighteenth-century Mughal painting. The photograph forms a poignant bookend to the visual narrative of Mughal rule. However, its legacy continued to inspire the visual culture of nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Asia. As the British crown established itself in the new British Indian Empire, it did so through the explicit enactment of Mughal ceremonial and protocol seen in the successive imperial assemblages, or coronation durbars, at Delhi (Codell 2012). The palace of the Red Fort now played host to grand exhibitions celebrating the city's Mughal past with a new local group of custodians of Mughal visual culture emerging on the scene. The Delhi Durbar Exhibition of 1910–1911 for example, was a turning point for the creation of a historical narrative of Mughal art and material culture in British colonial India. The exhibition showcased over 1000 Delhi-related objects on loan from all parts of India, especially from a host of private individuals – public officials, bankers, and merchants – based in Delhi. Of these, Khwaja Mahmud Hosain, a *munsif* (judge) and the Hungarian art dealer Imre Schwaiger along with other intellectuals and officers, formed the organizing committee of the exhibition (Loan Exhibition 1911). Hosain's co-authored catalogue of the exhibition was

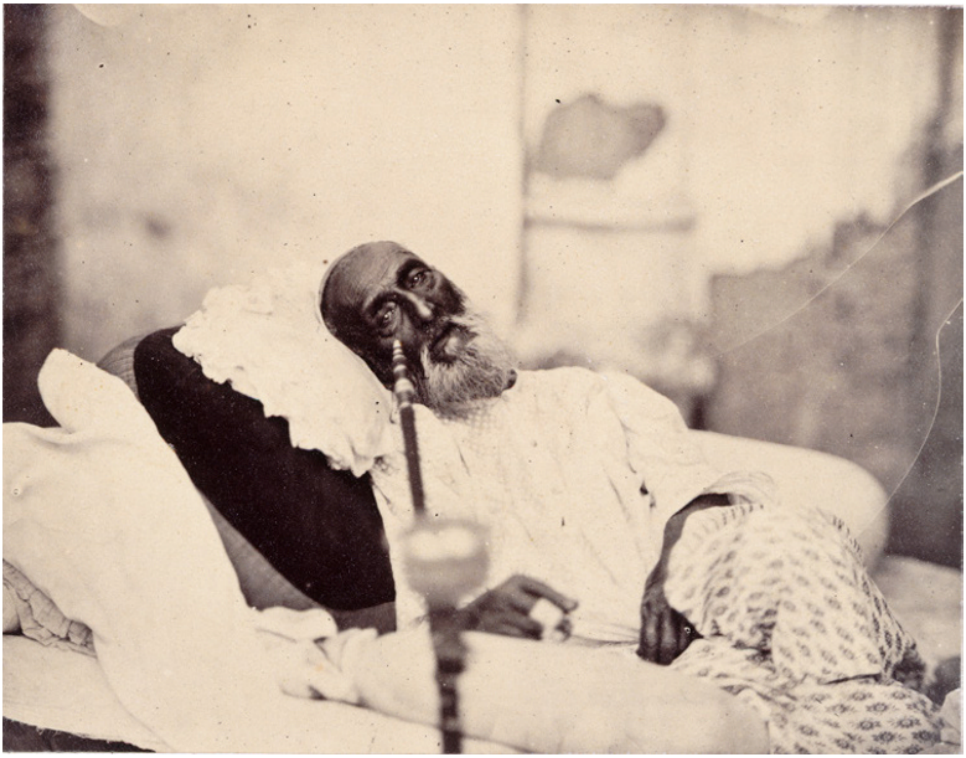

FIGURE 40.8 "Zafar in Captivity," May 1858, British Library Photo 797/37. Reproduced with permission.

in the vein of recent durbar exhibitions at Delhi, but differed from them in its sole emphasis on the material and artistic culture of the late Mughal period. The display at the Red Fort now privileged a museological modality that celebrated the historical legacy of Mughal visual culture firmly situating it in the realm of British India's recent past.

Notes

1 *Jahangir Celebrates the Hindu Festival of Holi*, The Minto Album, attributed to Govardhan, *c.* 1635, India, The Chester Beatty Library, In 07A.4a.

2 Cleveland Museum of Art, The Norweb Collection 1969.287.

3 For example, "*An Awadh Nobleman Reclining on a Couch by Moonlight*" by Nidha Mal, *c.* 1750, collection of Cynthia Hazen Polsky, New York.

4 See for example, *Muhammad Shah and Female Companions on a Terrace at Night*, painting from the "Large Clive Album," Mughal (Lucknow or Delhi), *c.* 1720–1725, V&A Museum, IS 133:64/B-1964.

5 *Recueil de toutes sortes de dessins sur les Usages et coutumes des Peuples de l'Indoustan ou Empire Mogol*, 1774, V&A, Asian Collection, IS 25–1980.
6 'Iyar i-Danish Johnson collection, British Library, Add.Or J.54, 26.
7 Hastings' Papers, British Library Add MSS 29138-93 passim, 184. Citation courtesy W. Dalrymple.
8 Ibid, passim.

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41

Kings and Traditions in *Différance*: Antiquity Revisited in Post-Safavid Iran

Talinn Grigor

This chapter examines the role of Iran's patron kings and patron reformers as agents of change and continuity in the politics of modernity and colonialism. Monarchs who ruled the Iranian plateau during a volatile period from the collapse of the Safavid Empire in 1722 to the downfall of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1979, not only reshaped longstanding traditions – such as those of Persian kingship and Shiʿism – but also embodied what constituted tradition at any given moment in the continuum of rapid change. The cultural and aesthetic norms that the royal court formulated in response to desires for change by adopting modern and ancient tropes, trickled down to the varied social classes as normative practices. These new (life)styles were then manifest forms of contemporaneity, of a specific kind of modernity either practiced by a rising bourgeoisie or rejected by the traditionalist clerics and merchants. The hasty nature of the bourgeois co-option of these norms, however, meant that reformist kings often found themselves in the position of coming to the defense of tradition.

Given the "bipolar nature of Iran's diplomacy" during the nineteenth century, architecture played a central role in mediating the conflicting forces of modernization (Amanat 2001: 17). A billboard to royal power that was not so mighty, or to reform movements that were not so certain, elaborate architectural façades represented an otherwise volatile national and royal authority and a native anxiety of lost splendors. Considering this context, Iran's post-Safavid architecture can be described as a *tabula rasa* upon which various agents came to offer a working balance between rapid change and existing tradition. The artistic practice of

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collage, which characterizes some of the monuments built during this period, was thus a fragmented attempt to keep up to date with the rest of the world amid fears of colonialism, while simultaneously keeping true to the internal economy of the self. The artistic production of the Zand (1750–1794), Qajar (1794–1925), and Pahlavi (1925–1979) dynasties is examined here through the premise of the negotiation between change and continuity that shaped the experience of modernity in Iran. Revivalism of the eclectic and the unrehearsed sort constituted a prevailing feature of this experience. Mimetic amalgamation and heterogeneous interventions were both the aesthetic norm and the standard of artistic valor. This chapter aims to reveal a wide range of rich revivalist practices in the post-Safavid periods that spoke to the ideological struggles of modernity. The era is marked by a watershed moment when Iran transformed its relationship *vis-à-vis* the rising forces of Europe. One could, therefore, divide that history into two segments. From the fall of Safavid Isfahan to the Ghelzay Afghans of Qandahar in 1722 to the signing of the Treaty of Golestan with Tsarist Russia in 1813, kings and nobles carried on the Safavid convention that placed the Perso-Shiʿi world at the epistemic center, requiring that all solutions and innovations were to flow primarily in and out of that locus. The humiliation of the Treaty of Golestan was exacerbated by defeat in the second Perso-Russian War (1826–1828) and the terms of the 1828 Treaty of Turkmenchai, which drew the new border between Russia and Iran at the Aras River, forcing the Qajar rulers to surrender all their Caucasian territories, along with those in the Persian Gulf. Together with other concessions, these territorial losses reduced Iran, a mighty empire under the Safavids, to a colonial instrument under the Qajars. Henceforward to the demise of Muhammad Riza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1941–1979), the Iranian artistic tradition was engaged predominantly with Europe's hegemonic presence.

The Zand and early Qajar aristocracy emulated, and in some cases appropriated, the best of Safavid art and architecture during the course of the eighteenth century. From the 1820s, however, we witness the first explicit manifestations of Zoroastrian/Mazdaic revival. Zand and early Qajar art attempted to restore Iran to its Perso-Shiʿi grandeur by renovating the basic qualities of the Safavid canon; by contrast, the post-Turkmenchai Treaty period saw the evolution of a new kind of aesthetic that aimed to derive magnificence from the long and illustrious ancient history of Persian monarchy going back to the pre-Islamic dynasties, the Achaemenids and the Sasanians. Analyzing royal portraits of the Zand and early Qajar monarchs, Abbas Amanat maintains that whereas until the Perso-Russian wars "the display of the [Kayanid] crown and other regalia had proven effective against domestic contestations," after that, such references to the Safavid legacy seemed an "embarrassingly hollow gesture," given the unmatched (cultural) force of European imperialism (Amanat 2001: 30). For Amanat and other historians, the Perso-Russian wars mark a paradigm shift in Iran's political development (Amanat 1997). Here, I would like to demonstrate that this is no less true of larger aesthetic movements at this watershed moment of change.

The post-1820s Qajar revival of Iran's Zoroastrian/Mazdaic past can also be read as a local reaction to the emphasis that European nationalism lavished on racial purity and ethnic longevity. Persian antiquity held a special place in that discourse. One interpretation of the meaning behind Iran's nineteenth-century revivalist art can relate it to an acceptance on the part of Iranians of colonial Orientalist discourses: a self-Orientalizing stance that uncritically embraces essentialist Western discourses about a timeless Persia. Another interpretation, one proposed here, concerns the use of Persian revival as a decisive and a highly effective anti-colonial discourse among reformist Iranians. This second phase of artistic revival, therefore, can itself be divided into two distinct parts: the Qajar period of high eclecticism in the nineteenth century and the essentialist Pahlavi attempts to purge all hybridity out of artistic conceptions and practices in the twentieth. Purity in revival defined the Pahlavi project of nation building. While different in their ideological use, Pahlavi and late Qajar revivalisms were plugged into modernist discourses on race and taste that operated on epistemic *différance* and thus dominated definitions of artistic worth and signification.

Zand and Early Qajar: Looking to the Recent Past

The fall of the Safavid Empire was lingering and violent, detrimental to artistic creation. From the reign of Abbas II (r. 1642–1666) – that marks the decline of Safavid rule – to the last official (shadow) monarch of the dynasty, Muhammad II (r. 1786), one counts more than a century of struggle for the Iranian throne. While the Nadiri wars following the Afghan invasion of Isfahan (1722) restored and expanded Iran's borders to their extent at the height of Safavid rule, they nevertheless caused significant damage to the built environment (Tucker 2006). A mark of the age, Nadir Shah Afshar's (r. 1736–1747) practice of destroying monuments was exceeded by that of Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar (r. 1794–1797) at the upper end of this epoch. Contestations among the many claimants to the Safavid throne underscore "the survival of Safavid concepts of the Iranian state" and the deep desire for the return of central stability (Perry 1971: 59). Post-Safavid art can be read in light of this return.

The three major Iranian rulers of the eighteenth century – Nadir Shah Afshar, Karim Khan Zand (r. 1751–1779), and Agha Muhammad Khan – had each experienced the grandeur of architecture and urbanism in Safavid Isfahan. They were each not only talented military warriors but also shrewd diplomats who understood the intricacies of royal legitimacy obtained from a Safavid lineage. In the symbol-conscious post-Safavid era, each aimed to (re)present himself as the legitimate carrier of that legacy. For each ruler the zenith of the Safavid dynasty, especially the figure of Shah 'Abbas the Great (r. 1587–1629), loomed large as "a byword for Iranian kingship" and "a touchstone by which subsequent regimes were measured" (Perry 2006: 11). The artistic heritage that they left behind embodied this tendency to look inward to the immediate past. Some Islamic rulers had looked outside their dominions, at times to pre-Islamic Iran, in search of impressively monumental models; for instance, the Mamluk ruler Sultan Hasan reportedly dispatched an envoy to measure the Sasanian Taq-i Kisra (540), the great arch of the Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon in Iraq, in order to surpass its scale in the qibla iwan of his funerary complex in Cairo (1361) (see O'Kane, CHAPTER 23), while the Mughal ruler Humayun (d. 1556) visited the Sasanian and Ilkhanid remains at the site of Takht-i Sulayman in Azerbaijan during his exile at the Safavid court in 1544 assuming it to be the Achaemenid Persepolis, Takht-i Jamshid (*c.* 515 BCE). Equally, Zand, Qajar, and Pahlavi kings searched for such inspirations within their own domains.

Emblems of royal legitimacy included the commissioning of portraits by each of these monarchs, with highly symbolic but minor alterations in details. These portraits continued the iconographic tradition of Safavid monarchs kneeling on a carpet, with royal regalia displayed against a palatial background. This continuity prevailed, despite the "westernizing style" of these images, which departed from the Safavid portrayal of royalty in manuscript painting, and their adoption of a large-scale oil medium as Robinson argues (1983: 296). The main source of formal emulation in these Afshari, Zand, and early Qajar images remains the Safavid painting tradition, especially the depiction of Shah ‘Abbas I in one of the feasting scenes at Chihil Sutun palace in Isfahan (1647) (Babaie 2008). One could argue that the large-scale Zand and early Qajar oil portraits were, in effect, building upon late Safavid mural painting traditions – which had already appropriated Europeanizing elements such as grand scale, the oil medium, and conventions of naturalistic depiction (Sims 2002) – rather than departing from canonical manuscript painting.

Amid anarchy and rootlessness, the reign of Karim Khan Zand is considered a window of calm and justice that produced a cluster of notable landmarks in Shiraz. Instead of adopting the title of *shah* (emperor), Karim Khan maintained the appellation of *vakil al-khalq* (deputy of the people) and ruled over most of the Iranian plateau with the exception of Khurasan. His political priority was to unite the Iranian territories under one politico-cultural center, as the Safavids had done before him. This was a domestic concern, a part of which entailed the imprisonment of Agha Muhammad Khan, who was later to found the Qajar dynasty, at the Zand court. From 1762 to his escape in 1779, Agha Muhammad was a hostage at Karim Khan's court. It is during this period that the former learned the neo-Safavid modes of royal representation that he would transmit to the next century. During their bitter struggle for the Safavid throne, neither Karim Khan nor Agha Muhammad Khan chose Isfahan, the capital of Shah ʿAbbas, as their seat of power. Forced by loyalty to their own ancestral territory and a desire for dynastic new beginnings, they each based their court in Shiraz (1762) and Tehran (1785), respectively.

Although few historians fail to underscore Karim Khan's fairness in governance and generosity in patronage – owing to which his dominion experienced an artistic renaissance – practically none delve into an analysis of Zand art and architecture.

A military man with concerns for practicality, yet caring for the public good, Karim Khan had a flare for construction that turned Shiraz into the envy of neighboring, and once unmatched, Isfahan. Whereas the Afghan (1723) and the Nadiri (1744) sacks had devastated and depopulated Shiraz, during the ensuing two decades of Zand rule, it became as prosperous as Isfahan during its heyday (Perry 2006: 95). In his attempt to restore a neo-Safavid centralized state, Karim Khan's ambition in urban renewal was to make Shiraz a center of high art and architecture. He erected the 25-foot fortification on stone foundations, the encircling moat, and its six gates; he restructured the general urban plan from 19 to 11, better defensible, residential quarters. The city's public spaces, including large open areas, parks, and wide streets that accommodated many festivals and gatherings, were rendered safe and functional by the addition of pavements, irrigation and drainage systems, linked to the royal complex.

Adopting Safavid urban design principles, Karim Khan oversaw the erection of the Vakili structures around the central square of Shiraz, Maydan-i Shah, which in turn, served as models for Aga Muhammad Khan's Tehran, when it became Iran's new capital. As in Isfahan, the royal district served the triple function of economic, political, and religio-cultural urban life. About 12 000 well-compensated hands were put to work to build the famed citadel of Karim Khan (Arg-i Karim Khan) in 1766–1767 (Figure 41.1). Serving as royal residence and seat of empire,

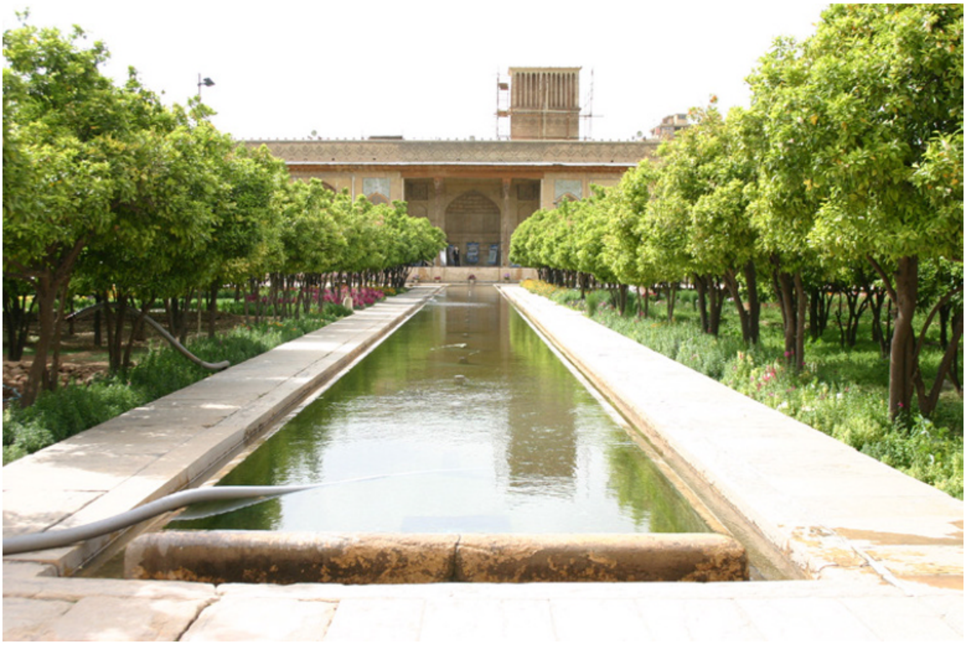

FIGURE 41.1 Main façade of one of the three *talar*s in the citadel of Karim Khan (*arg-i karim khan*), Shiraz, 1766–1767. Source: Talinn Grigor, 2007.

this medieval fortress enclosed an area of one acre. The four living and administrative quarters that ran along its 40-foot walls and connected the four towers, surrounded a large courtyard planted with trees that was divided in two by a long shallow pool. Appropriating the Safavid use of the *talar* (pillared hall) – reinvented by Shah ʿAbbas I from Achaemenid prototypes – Karim Khan erected three *talar* iwans on the northern, western, and southern courtyard façades. The impressive, well-ornamented *talar*s, used for ceremonial purposes, each led into other administrative, residential, and service areas behind and on the upper floor.

The 46-foot corner towers, raised on stone foundations and lower walls, were austerely decorated with monochrome brick patterns, echoing regional Lor and Lak tribal ornamentation, while a large glazed tile panel flanked the only entrance on the eastern wall of the compound. Technically crude in comparison, yet stylistically aligned with Safavid painting traditions, the multicolored panel depicted the hero Rustam and the White Demon in battle, a battle described in Firdawsi's *Shahnama* (977–1010). The same brick pattern that decorated the towers ran at the top end of the interior walls as well as on the wind-catchers, typical in vernacular architecture. Restored to its original condition in 1977 and the 1990s, an aerial view of the castle reveals the clarity, precision, and efficiency that also defined Karim Khan's vision in military campaigns, his ethos of rulership, and architectural patronage.

Around the citadel, Karim Khan erected other amenities. In the south of the square stood a large public garden, the Bagh-i Nazar, and the spacious two-iwan Masjid-i Vakil (1773). Between these, the Hammam-i Vakil (bathhouse, *c.* 1776) catered exclusively to the Zand aristocracy (Afsar 1974), while the famed, enclosed Bazaar-i Vakil (*c.* 1770) served the commercial needs of the populace. With special administrative and architectural facilities, including four caravanserais, these expedited international trade with India to the east and the Arab lands and Europe to the west. The audience chamber, Divankhana (1765), pivotal to Karim Khan's policies of fair rule, and a drum-house (*naqqarakhana*) flanked the northeastern section of the square. The Imarat-i Kolah-i Farangi (lit. the European hat building), a centrally planned domed pavilion skirted by four alcoves, was designed after Safavid forms and stood at the northeastern tip of Bagh-i Nazar. We find the prototype of each of these structures in Isfahan's Safavid Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan, also known as Maydan-i Shah (1598–1629). Following in the footsteps of Shah ʿAbbas I, who gave shape to the imperial capital of Isfahan, Karim Khan had chosen to move away from the historical center of Shiraz in order to erect these Vakili monuments. His 1772 urban renewal project – which included the restoration of the tombs of the Shirazi poets Hafiz (d. 1390) and Saʿdi (d. 1292) and the Shirazi Muzaffarid ruler Shah Shuja (d. 1384) – was also guided by preservationist policies (Curzon 1892: 108; Grigor 2009).

Before assuming the throne of Iran and embarking on royal construction in Shiraz, however, Karim Khan had constructed a series of landmarks during his military campaigns around the plateau. In Yazd, notable Zand architecture included the Bagh-i Daulatabad (*c.* 1750), a residence of Karim Khan. Erected by Muhammad Taqi Khan Bafqi, it is a structure sponsored by the nobility, who followed and at times modified royal taste. Here, too, we see the same effort of keeping the Safavid architectural legacy alive, while conforming to contemporary technical and aesthetic innovations. With a regional wind-catcher rising to some 108 feet, this pavilion sat amid a large garden, following Safavid palace and landscape conventions. Multicolor stained glasses were set into wood-frame windows that enclosed the pavilion. While stationed in Tehran during his campaign to subdue the Afghans of Mazandaran and Qajars of Astarabad in 1758–1759, Karim Khan also commissioned Ustad Ghulam Riza Tabrizi to fortify Shah Tahmasp's (r. 1524–1576) city-walls. He erected an audience chamber (*divankhana*, 1759) with spiraling marble columns adjacent to the Khalvat-i Karim Khani (1759), in addition to other administrative buildings and private quarters north of the Safavid complex established by Shah Sulayman (r. 1669–1694). During the ensuing two centuries, Qajar and Pahlavi Tehran would grow to perpetuate the Iranian tradition of kingship and to become a vast megapolis around Karim Khan's *divankhana*.

Agha Muhammad Khan's capture of Shiraz in 1792 put an end to the city's prosperity and to Zand patronage. He pillaged it, destroyed its fortifications, and killed its Lak population. The center of monarchy in Iran thereafter permanently shifted to the north. On 20 March 1785, the new king declared Tehran the imperial seat of his dynasty and the "Seat of the Caliphate." Following the models of Shah ʿAbbas I and Karim Khan, he initiated the creation of a new locus of kingship around a royal complex: the Gulistan Palace in Tehran. This new complex was sited so as to benefit from existing Safavid and Zand structures in order to further legitimize the new dynasty. Having been held a well-treated hostage in the Zand court for two decades, Aga Muhammad Khan had first-hand experience of how to set the structures of royal legitimacy as the heir to the Perso-Shiʿi throne. The proper expansion of Gulistan Palace, not just by the first two Qajar kings, became "a vehicle for the expression of … power" (Scarce 2001: 104).

On the grounds of Gulistan, the second Qajar monarch, Fath ʿAli Shah (r. 1797–1834) crowned himself king in Karim Khan's *divankhana* in 1798. As the governor of Fars, Kirman, and Yazd, the 26-year-old king had familiarized himself with the heritage of the south, both Islamic and Zoroastrian/Mazdaic. Eight years after his coronation, he completed major additions to the *divankhana* of the Gulistan Palace in Tehran, now renamed Imarat-i Takht-i Marmar (Marble Throne Building), in the north of the compound (Figure 41.2). Dramatically staged on an elevated porch and framed between two columns inside a Safavid–Zand *talar*, this edifice marked imperial absolutism. As a monarch whose personality, taste, and vigor coincided with the mandates of royal extravagance and opulence, Fath ʿAli also erected the Imarat-i Badgir (Wind-Catcher Building, 1813) in the southern section of the complex, adjacent to the Talar-i Almas (Diamond Hall, 1801). These were two new examples of the best stained glass and mirror-work, emulating those in Safavid Isfahan and Zand Shiraz. Through the skillful

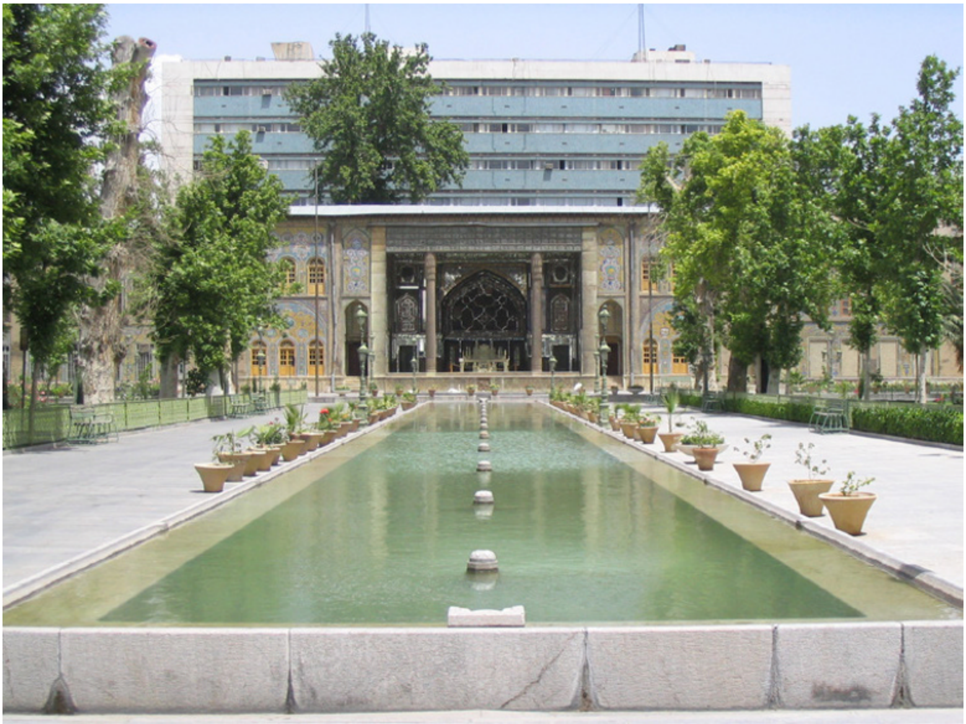

Figure 41.2 Main façade of Fath ʿAli Shah's Imarat-i Takht-i Marmar, Golestan Palace, Tehran, 1806. Source: Meline Hovnanian, 2004. Reproduced with permission.

orchestration of diplomacy, architecture, and progeny, Fath ʿAli Shah had secured by 1813 his family's rightful ownership of the "Persian crown."

High Qajar Period: Revivalism as Recovered Kingdom

The Qajars inherited, or rather seized and reunified, the mighty Safavid Empire with its unprecedented artistic, architectural, and urban planning traditions that were no longer possible to match or outdo. The frustration of this inability to surpass the Safavid heritage was aggravated by the fact that the Qajar reign coincided with the zenith of European imperial expansion in West Asia. Various Qajar kings succeeded in safeguarding the "Guarded Domains of Iran" – a renewed version of the Sasanian conception of *Iranshahr* (Dominion of the Aryans), itself forging a mythical link to the Achaemenids – by rising to the challenges of Western imperialism and of domestic bids for royal power. That the Qajars managed to come to terms with Safavid and Zand diplomatic and artistic legacies in domestic affairs while keeping Iran from conquest by European powers speaks rather well to their own legacy. Revivalism as an artistic practice came into its own at the pinnacle of Qajar rule, indeed because of it. That Iran was never colonized or colonizable further complicated the dialectics of power and its battleground of artistic representation. The tensions that went into maintaining a sovereign but vulnerable empire resulted in a unique artistic *différance* in outlook.

For the Qajar aristocracy, nobility, and intelligentsia, a heavy psychological blow was inflicted in the aftermath of the Perso-Russian wars by the signing of the treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchai (1828). These effectively rendered Iran, an impressive kingdom under the Safavids, a colonial plaything in Europe's Great Game. The image of Iran as a superpower was debased, so that it came to be seen as a "weak and vulnerable buffer state" (Amanat 2001: 17). While before that Europe was relatively marginal to Iranian self-perception, now it served as "a model of change" as in other Islamic regions at that time, whether colonized or not (Ringer 2001: 53). The small but strong-minded intelligentsia began to see and probe the reasons for what they perceived as Iran's deficiency in relation to "Western civilization." Military, institutional, infrastructural, and sociocultural practices were scrutinized to determine the malaise that had befallen the empire. Subsequent patronage of architecture, as one of the most visible of these healing attempts, aimed to restore the image of Iran as a civilized modern nation with a prestigious ancient tradition of kingship (Filippani-Ronconi 1978; Lambton 1988).

It was precisely at this moment that a revivalistic architecture was invented, took on explicit form, and occupied a special place in the politics of patronage and appearance. To (re)present the empire as majestic was to cling to its sovereignty. To emblematize the nation as such was to counter-narrate the colonial discourses on Oriental decadence and civilizational backwardness. From the 1820s to 1979, upper class Iranians, be they conservative members of the royal household or vocal advocates of liberal reforms, evoked ancient imagery to ascertain monarchical and national worth. This served the double purpose of fortifying the domestic legitimacy of the Persian tradition of kingship and at once of repudiating Western sway over Iran. If Iran was to be westernized, it was to be done *à la Persan*. The interpretation of the structures with explicitly Zoroastrian/Mazdaic iconography ought to be made in light of this imperial dialectics. In embracing an architectural language to express political might, the Qajars were instituting a paradigm shift in self-representation.

The modern Iranian elite admired the Achaemenid (559–331 BCE) and the Sasanian (224–651) dynasties that had ruled the Iranian plateau before the Arab conquest. The reign of the Achaemenids, founded by Cyrus (r. 559–530 BCE) and expanded by Darius I (r. 521–486 BCE), was dominant in their imagination partly because Persia stretched from Egypt to India from 559 BCE to its defeat by Alexander in 331 BCE. The ancient Achaemenid and Sasanian sites of Persepolis (Takht-i Jamshid), Pasargadae, and Naqsh-i Rustam in Fars and Bisutun and Taq-i Bustan in Kirmanshah were therefore studied in the late Qajar and Pahlavi periods.

Fragile frontiers often promote a culture of formal façades. After the Perso-Russian wars, artistic allusion to this antiquity was pivotal to the Qajar strategy of political survival. Fath ʿAli Shah initiated the appropriation of Zoroastrian/Mazdaic visual culture in contemporary practices. Qajar architecture stood as a billboard to this "mix of formal façades and informal practices" (Amanat 2008: 13) and buildings served as urban *tabula rasa*s to practice an eclecticism that became the artistic norm in the second half of the century. Characteristic of the nineteenth century, Qajars were also incorporating in their art and architecture the Safavid and Zand legacy, which had retooled the language of kingship in order to bind ancient Iranian and Shiʿi Muslim identities into a discernible whole (Babaie 2006, 2008). Fath ʿAli Shah crafted an image of monarchy that initially mimicked Zand practices but later on diplomatically distanced itself from Zand aesthetics to claim legitimacy as the rightful successor to the Safavid throne. The formal appropriation of such historic architectural elements as the *talar* and the *pishtaq* (portal projecting from the façade) demonstrates Qajar ingenuity and an operative practice of collage.

Fath ʿAli Shah masterfully deployed visual imagery to transform the tribal image of the Qajar rulership (originally a Turkic tribe that became Persianized under Safavid rule) into a full-blown monarchy. Having at his disposal the financial and institutional means as well as familiarity with Sasanian art, Fath ʿAli Shah commissioned seven rock reliefs that borrowed the same technique, scale, and iconography used by Sasanian kings: his portraits and those of his heirs were carved near the Allah-u Akbar gate in Shiraz; in the grotto of Taq-i Bustan (fourth century, Figure 41.3); and at the Cheshme-yi ʿAli in Ray. Rather than exalting pre-Islamic history through a peculiarly Orientalist premise that prescribed the birth of Islam as a point of rupture, these reliefs denoted the ideal image of Persian kingship in a continuum. A subtle contemporary awareness is, nevertheless, depicted in these as in most similar nineteenth-century Qajar art. As Lerner argues, while in Sasanian reliefs, the king hovers in the eternal timelessness of Persian kingship, Fath ʿAli Shah grounded his image of eternal kingship in a real place: the Imarat-i Takht-i Marmar in the Gulistan Palace of Tehran (Lerner 1991: 36; Lerner 1980). The two pillars flanking his figure on the reliefs of this palatial structure were markers of time and place in the Qajar representation of power. In Ray and Kirmanshah, the king was "responding to the challenge of Iran's imperial past," as Leyla Diba notes, "fashioning an image as resplendent as anything mythologized in the *Shahnameh* or memorialized in Sassanian rock-reliefs" (Diba 1998: 31). While the Qajars were not unique among Muslim rulers to utilize figural representation for propaganda purposes, their deployment of figural portraits in painting and figural reliefs in architecture emerged as an "emblem of the monarchy" peculiar to nineteenth-century Iran (Diba 1998: 9).

In 1848, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848–1896) insisted on a coronation in the Imarat-i Takht-i Marmar in order to confirm his dynastic lineage as well as to re-establish the role of the Gulistan Palace in Iranian diplomacy. While his father,

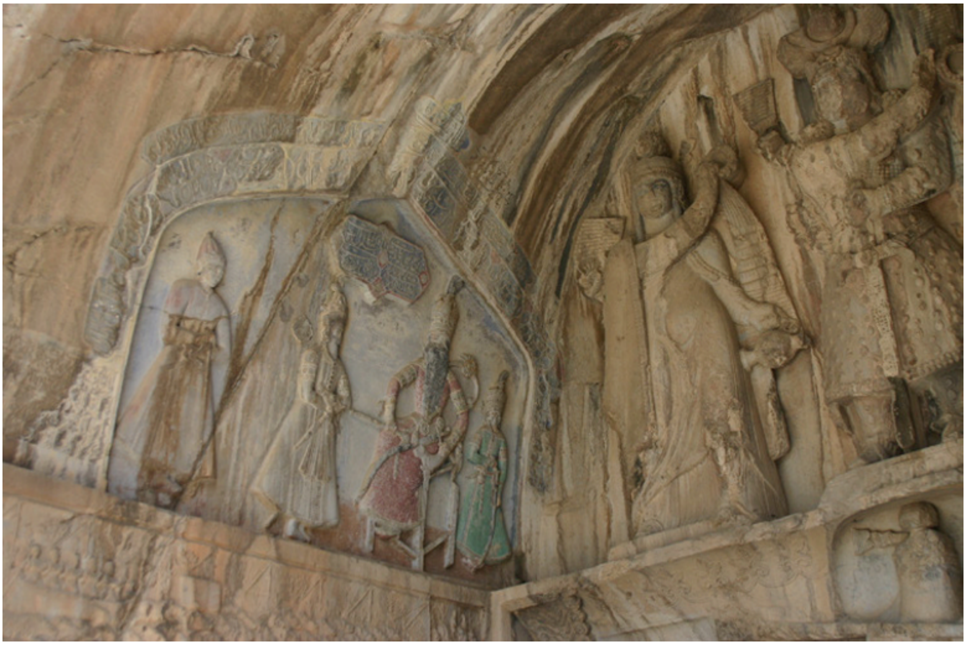

Figure 41.3 View of rock cut depicting Fath ʿAli Shah on the throne, inside the Sasanian grotto of Taq-i Bustan, Kirmanshah, nineteenth century. Source: Talinn Grigor, 2007.

Muhammad Shah had foregone patronage of the arts, the son embarked on the largest urban and architectural reconstruction of the capital in five phases between 1853 and 1895. In 1865, he hired Haji Abuʾl-Hasan Mimar Navaʾi and Ustad Muhammad ʿAli Kashi for major reconstruction at the Gulistan with an awareness of Iran's pre- and post-Islamic architectural history and of Western models. In these new works, stylistic fusion was the norm. During the structural and decorative upgrading of Fath ʿAli Shahʾs Imarat-i Badgir (a wind-tower edifice), the two wooden pillars and the sidewalls of the main *talar* were replaced with four marble columns, producing a protruding porch with a panoramic view of the garden. By so doing, Nadir al-Din recreated at Gulistan a small-scale version of the seventeenth-century Safavid ʿAli Qapu Palace in Isfahan. The Takkieh Dawlat (1867, demolished 1947), seating some 1000 spectators around a circular stage and three-story balconies under a semi-permanent dome for Taʿzieh (Shiʿi passion play) performances, was likewise a hybrid of local decorative program and European building typology, for Nasir al-Din had decreed its design after Charles Garnier's Paris opera house began in 1857.

The king's patronage of Takkieh Dawlat and of renovations to important Shiʿi shrines – such as that of Imam Riza (fourteenth to twentieth centuries) in Mashhad and Shah ʿAbd al-ʿAzim (ninth to twentieth centuries) in Ray – constituted a public display of piety that aimed to balance the image of his reign between loyalty to Shiʿi traditions and push for Western progress. While these shrines were reworked or expanded in tune with Safavid–Qajar practices, in palace design, he took greater liberty in synthesizing a range of designs. The erection of Shams al-Imara (Sun Building, 1866) on the eastern edge of the Gulistan Palace and the Kakh-i Abyaz (White Palace, 1891), rumored to have been designed by the king himself, on its western edge, signaled deliberate stylistic leaps. On one hand, Shams al-Imara included a mechanical clock that overlooked Nasir Khusraw Avenue on one side and the gardens of Gulistan on the other. It denoted the notion of progress so essential to the early rule of Nasir al-Din. On the other hand, the fully mature neoclassicism of Kakh-i Abyaz's decorative program signaled the shah's willingness to embrace European taste as his own. Other major additions by Nasir al-Din to the Gulistan Palace included the Talar-i Aaj (Ivory Hall, 1863), the Talar-i Salam (Reception Hall, 1874), the Muze-yi Makhsus (Special Museum, 1874), the Talar-i Ayineh (Hall of Mirrors, 1874), and the Imarat-i Brelian (Hall of Brilliant Diamonds, 1874). Each displayed a kind of rich eclecticism and formal façade.

While producing an aristocratic family of 5000 members, Fath ʿAli Shah proceeded to establish a system of lavish court patronage throughout the empire. The center of high art was the Gulistan Palace, out of which standards of aesthetic judgment were disseminated. The different members of the royal family who were sent to govern parts of the empire followed the king's practice of patronage by erecting small-scale versions of the royal domain in the provinces. The mid-nineteenth century, hence, witnessed the construction of mansions sponsored by the nobility outside the capital. Their designs reflected the ruling elite's desire for grandeur and opulence, veiling and thus reconciling their fear of the empire's shrinking dominion and prestige. The need to restore Iran's international status prompted an outburst in construction among the small but influential intelligentsia that came of age at the end of the century. In the morphological, spatial, and decorative development of these mansions – ranging in style from Safavid garden typology true to the Perso-Indian vernacular in the 1800s, to highly eclectic forms of Perso-European types in the 1850s, to a fully mature revivalism in the 1880s – we discern the elite's struggle to preserve national integrity amid Europe's cultural expansion.

While the Bagh-i Fin (1805–1811), a celebrated garden outside Kashan, was an example of the persistence of the late Safavid and Zand building practices, Imarat-i Bagh-i Firdaws (Palace of the Garden of Paradise, 1840) in Shemiran, northern Tehran, was a classic model of post-Perso-Russian-war eclecticism associated with subroyal patrons (Figure 41.4). Commissioned by Dost ʿAli Khan II Muayyer (1819–1873), the 2.6-acre land contained two residential mansions; only one has been preserved. Characteristic of a man of his class and position in Qajar high society, Dost ʿAli was a benefactor of the arts and Bagh-i Firdaws was his prize possession (Diba 2002: 36). His numerous painting commissions included an 1846 watercolor portrait of himself (Louvre Museum) standing on a hilltop,

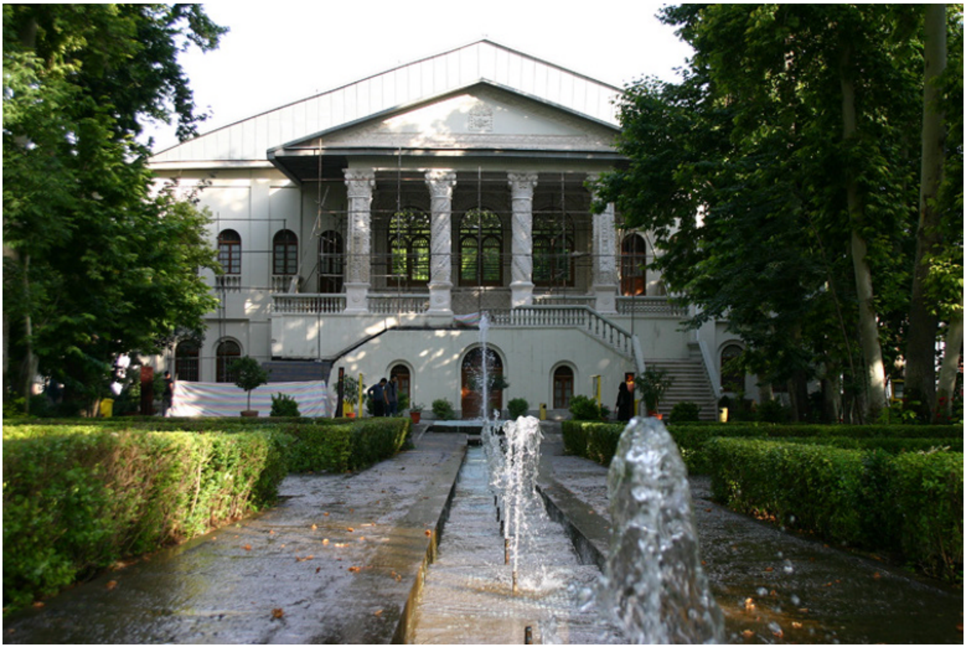

FIGURE 41.4 Main façade of Bagh-i Ferdows House, northern Tehran, 1840s. Source: Talinn Grigor, 2009.

overlooking the Bagh-i Firdaws (Diba 2002: 37). Related to the Qajar royal family through marriage in addition to his Safavid ancestry, Dost ʿAli had created one of the earliest examples of eclecticism, synthesizing a range of palace design traditions from ancient Achaemenid and Greek, to British and French neoclassicism to Safavid, Zand, and Qajar styles. The result was such that Dost ʿAli had felt that he should offer it to his son's father-in-law, Nasir al-Din Shah. While he kept the mansion to himself, Bagh-i Firdaws nevertheless exercised influence on the development of royal commissions; as Nasir al-Din's Supervisor of Royal Buildings, Dost ʿAli was responsible for the erection of the famed Takkieh Dawlat and Shams al-Imara with their brand of neoclassicism.

Designed by the architect Ustad Husayn, the building of some 10.8-square-foot was positioned so as to attract attention on the northern façade upon arrival, while the southern façade enjoyed a gorgeous view down the natural slope of Tehran. The former was flanked by a *talar*, accessed by a set of staircases. These were enhanced by a long pool that confirmed the importance of the elaborately ornamented *talar*. Much like Safavid, Zand, and Qajar palaces, the centrality of the *talar* as a stage of (power) display was maintained, while the traditional two columns, seen at Arg-i Karim Khan and at the *divankhana*, were transformed into a stage with two ceremonial staircases previously unknown in Safavid architecture. The *talar* was opened on three sides for a 180-degree view of the surrounding garden. A similar, albeit narrower and enclosed, *talar* adorned the southern façade. The meticulous stuccowork, with dynamic floral motifs rising to the top of the two inner columns and the two outer piers, was reproduced in each *talar*. The walls were also entirely decorated with similar plaster moldings. Eight columns sat on high bases and were capped with composite Corinthian capitals. The interior was adorned along the Safavid tradition of mirror-work (*ayineh-kari*) and tile-work (*kashi-kari*).

At Bagh-i Firdaws, two architectural elements are striking – and out of context. First, the grand double staircase with balustrades was possibly inspired by Jean Androuet du Cerceau's horseshoe staircase for Louis XIII's Chateau of Fontainebleau, outside Paris, by the staircase of the Schloss Petronell (seventeenth century) in Petronell, Austria, built by the architects Domenico Carlone and Carlo Canevale, or by the Troja Palace (1679–1691) built for the Counts of Sternberg outside Prague, in the Czech Republic. The second element was the pediment, with a tympanum left undecorated with the exception of a circular opening at the center. Significantly enhancing the architecture of façades, both the horseshoe staircase and the neoclassical pediment must have impressed themselves upon the façade-conscious Qajar imagination. Iranian patrons who traveled to Europe, as did Nasir al-Din in 1873 and 1889, returned home to (often verbally) convey their desire for the reproduction of such structural elements and decorative motifs to local architects and craftsmen. This must have been the case in Bagh-i Firdaws, for after the death of Dost ʿAli in 1873, his son and Nasir al-Din's son-in-law Dost Muhammad Khan (1855–1913) completed the decorations of the house upon his return from a long sojourn in Europe.

In the second half of the century, other Qajar patrons – nobility, wealthy merchants, well-to-do clerics, and reformers – continued to sponsor private residences that ranged stylistically from European neoclassicism to revivalism of local vernaculars including Bagh-i Shahzadeh (1850s) in Mahan and the houses of Amerita (1850s), Borujerdi (1857) by ʿAli Maryam, and Tabatabai (1880s) in Kashan. By the 1880s, Achaemenid and Sasanian revivalism was earnestly practiced by a varied range of patrons with diverse social backgrounds and ideological priorities. Direct but mediated copies of scenes of royal investiture (e.g., of the Sasanian rulers Ardashir I (r. 224–241) and Shapur I (r. 240–270) from Naqsh-i Rustam), heroic combats (i.e., the king slaying a lion), royal or state portraits (i.e., the enthroned monarch, or standing soldier), and various well-known Zoroastrian/Mazdaic images and icons (e.g., the *faravahar* – the slaying of a lion) were reproduced in mansions and villas. In Shiraz, the Qavam family built Bagh-i Iram (mid-nineteenth century, by Haji Muhammad Hasan), Narenjistan (1886), and Afifabad (1880) (Grigor 2007: 567–569; O'Donnell 1970), which were inspired by Achaemenid palace typology, with a blend of Achaemenid, Sasanian, Safavid, and Qajar morphologies (Bakhtiar and Hillenbrand 1983; Hillenbrand 1983). In the decorative programs, a masterful play between Safavid mirror-work and tile-work, Qajar and Zand reinterpretations of the Safavid *talar*, and

Achaemenid relief architecture was synthesized with modern artistic media such as photography. The *faravahar*, the investiture of kings, and other scenes from various archaeological sites were given novel architectural narratives through a free process of collage. An often repeated motif was one of Naqsh-i Rustam's best-known reliefs: the triumph of the Sasanian king Shapur I over the Roman emperor Valerian and Philip the Arab. With little ambiguity, the selection of this image revealed the nobility's anxiety over the fate of their kingdom.

The images reproduced at these mansions not only entered into a dialogue with Achaemenid and Sasanian reliefs but also with the numerous Qajar larger than life royal portraits. As Diba has demonstrated, this kind of historic conversation was an artistic tradition as enduring as that of kingship (1998: 31). Such figures were set in a parallel architectural context as majestic as the paintings themselves. The art and architecture that synthesized the ancient and the contemporary deployed the opulence of visual imagery in order to restore the injured image of the Iranian monarchy. Valerian's prostration in front of Shapur was perhaps the most telling of these selections. It is worth noting that as late as the sixteenth century, Valerian's humiliating defeat at Edessa (modern Urfa) was vivid in the European imagination, an example being Hans Holbein the Younger's 1521 painting of it. The recycling of old images to perpetuate deep-rooted stereotypes and thus to demonstrate supremacy, at least symbolically, remains very much an enduring practice. Zack Snyder's 2007 blockbuster movie, *300*, that exalts violence by vilifying the Achaemenid royal court and army amid the United States' 2003 invasion of Iraq, an ancient Persian territory, is a case in point. Snyder's deformed and grotesque Xerxes is, in effect, the discursive embodiment of aesthetic *différance*, an (Oriental) difference *vis-à-vis* a deferral of (Western) taste.

Late Qajar and Pahlavi: Eclecticism as Anti-Colonialism

As Iranian kingship stepped into the twentieth century, the practice of synthesizing Islamic and Zoroastrian/Mazdaic images proliferated among the upper classes and began to trickle down. After the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1906, the authority of an absolute monarchy was challenged by a rising bourgeoisie that recycled revived images in order to claim political power for itself. During the last two decades of Qajar reign, secular nationalists commissioned residential buildings, predominately in Tehran, with a hybrid of revivalist and neoclassical features. A few examples erected in the 1900s and 1910s and described as the hybrid style (Grigor 2007) include the first modern Zoroastrian temple in Tehran, the Anjuman-i Ardian; the buildings forming the Hasanabad and the Toupkhana squares; the National Consultative Assembly in Baharistan Square; the Post and Telegraph Building in Sipah Square (destroyed in the 1960s); the Marble and Green palaces; the Qavam al-Saltana House; Tabriz's City Hall; and the now obscure, but fascinating, Seyr al-Istam, Fazil al-Iraqi House, and Pirnia House in

Tehran as well as the Amir Nizam House in Tabriz. Many of these landmarks were erected to challenge the absolute rule of Qajar kings and were eventually demolished by the Pahlavi state during its sweeping urban reform of the 1930s.

The reigns of the two Pahlavi kings, Riza Shah (r. 1925–1941), who overthrew the Qajars, and Muhammad Riza Shah, were characterized by a commitment to industrial and infrastructural expansion, pushing architecture to the forefront of the nation-building project. At the pinnacle of Riza Shah's rule, when the hybrid style was appropriated as the official visual language of the nation-state, it was "purified" by being stripped of its extraneous European and Islamic elements, while the autochthonous Zoroastrian/Mazdaic features were refined and perfected. The proportions and decorative details of these new structures were readjusted to conform to archaeological discoveries in the late 1920s and 1930s. The desire for authenticity and linguistic and cultural homogeneity rose from the heterogeneous nature of that which was being portrayed as pure. The cleansing of European and Islamic architectural elements from the hybrid style was a small part of a much larger project of manufacturing a homogeneous nation.

Erected under the eyes of Riza Shah's ministers, prominent examples of the Pahlavi neo-Achaemenid and neo-Sasanian architecture in Tehran consisted of the main post office (*c.* 1935), the justice ministry (1936), the Firouz Bahram Zoroastrian high school (1932), the first national bank (*bank-i milli*, 1935), André Godard's 1939 Archaeological Museum (*muze-yi iran bastan*), Maxime Siroux's National Library (*kitabkhane-yi milli*), and the police headquarters in both downtown Tehran (1933) and Darband (*c.* 1935, Figure 41.5). Outside Tehran, Riza Shah ordered the construction of Firdawsi's modern mausoleum (1934) in Tus (Grigor 2009: 46–81) and a hotel (1934) and palace (*c.* 1935) in Ramsar. These synthesized Western modernist morphologies and plans with Zoroastrian/Mazdaic iconography including, most prominently, the lion hunt and bullheaded columns associated with the Persepolis and other ancient sites. The Achaemenid–Safavid–Zand–Qajar *talar* of royal audience typology was now transformed into a modernist allegory. Each landmark, in turn, facilitated the rewriting of the nation on the constructs of ancient purity, monarchical longevity, and ethnic rebirth.

The birth of a new nation was tied to narratives about Persian art. During the closing of the nineteenth century, there developed a local art historiography, primarily written by secular Iranians. The appearance of numerous publications documenting and praising Persian artistic history was indicative of a psychological substitution of a historical and cultural sense of merit for military loses. Mohammad Naser Forsat al-Dowleh's *Asar-i Ajam* (1890), Etemad al-Saltaneh's *Guide to the History of the Parthian House* (1892), Mohammad Husayn Foroughi's *History of Sasanian Monarchy* (1897), Mohammad Ali Foroughi's *Brief History of Iran* (1901), Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani's *Royal Mirrors: History of Iran* (1906), as well as journals like Husayn Kazemzadeh's *Iranshahr* (Country of Iran, 1922–1927), Moshfeq Kazemi's *Farangestan* (Europe, 1924–1926), and Mahmud Afshar's *Ayandeh*

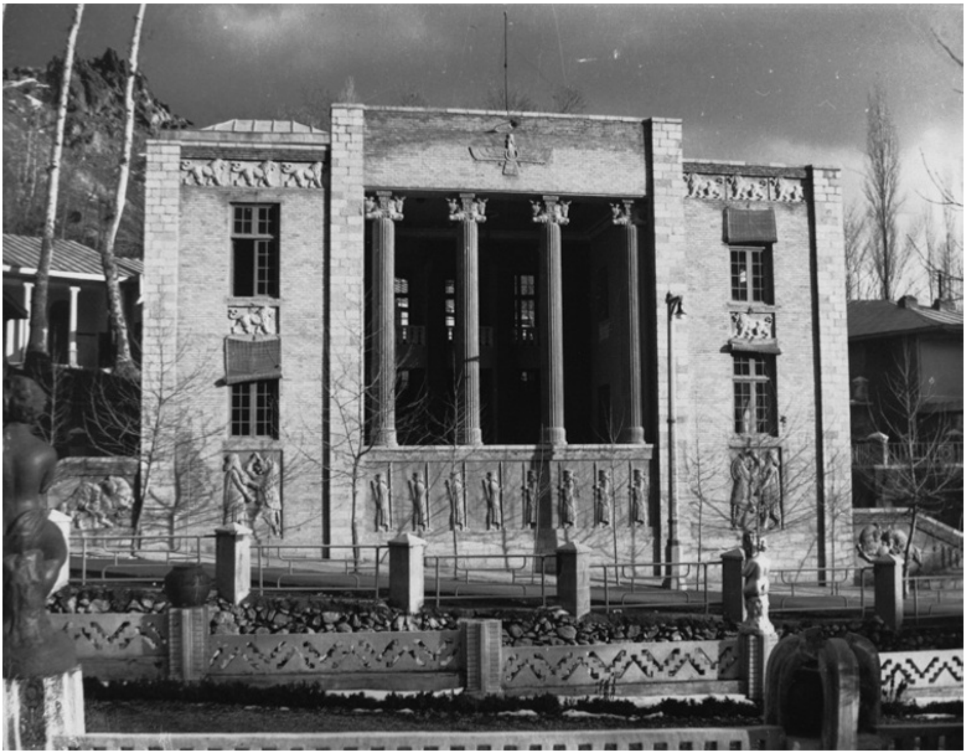

FIGURE 41.5 Front façade of the police prefecture (*shahrbani*) in Darband, northern Tehran, *c.* 1935. Source: Ali Khadem Collection, courtesy of Farrokh Khadem and Cyrus Samii. Reproduced with permission.

(The Future, 1925) were among the sources that advocated an integrated, secular nation-state; a homogeneous urban civilization; linguistic and cultural modernization; secular education for both sexes; proliferation of industrial technology; implementation of Western political philosophy; and above all, a wholesale return to Iran's Zoroastrian/Mazdaic artistic tradition. Most argued that the "savage" Arab invasions of the seventh century had ruined the "civilized" Zoroastrian empires, after which the Muslim Arab "imperialism had retarded 'the creative abilities of Iran's talented Aryan population.'"[1]

These publications aspired to boost national prestige. In the decades that followed, they also served as a model to write an Iranocentric and a secular (art) historiography. Between 1906 and 1980, this discourse represented Iran's artistic heritage as the manifestation of the nation's most authentic collective identity, its safest passage to the future, and its basis for equality, if not superiority, *vis-à-vis* other nations, especially the West. Prominent members of the state, including Hasan Pirnia, Seyyed Hasan Taqizadeh, Mohammad Ali Foroughi, Arbab

Keikhosrow Shahrokh, Isa Sadiq, Said Nafisi, and Ali Asghar Hekmat, in their scholarly works, journals, speeches, and memoirs, underscored, time and again, the basic idea that "the country would be saved from backwardness and imperialism by cleansing the language of foreign words, by reviving the ancient religion of Zoroaster, and by rebuilding the centralized state of the Sasanids"; that "the modern nation had only to imitate and emulate" its ancient cultural heritage "in order to reclaim its greatness."[2]

The prominent historian among them, Foroughi, credited Cyrus the Great for enlarging the Persian Empire from Europe to China. He insisted that "until then, there has never been a government as large as that in the world," and described Sasanian rule as "the best times in the history of our country," with a territory "twice the size of present-day Iran," extending from India to the Caspian Sea. Foroughi further wrote that these were "the natural boundaries of Iran."[3] As the literary editor of *Le Journal de Téhéran*, Said Nafisi later insisted that, while Persians have "forgotten all our past historical brilliancy, our struggle against Babylon, Athens, Sparta, Rome, and Byzantium," they nevertheless have an equal right among "civilized people," because they are the "architects of that [one] civilization that the human kind glorifies today."[4]

In light of this nationalist historiography, post-Safavid art was lamented as a period of hopeless decline and deformation. Qajar art *in toto* was thought as unworthy of preservation and undeserving of much art historical attention. One of the three influential Orientalists working in Iran, Arthur Upham Pope, encouraged Riza Shah to erase traces of Qajar culture. Forecasting – and to a degree provoking – the elimination of Qajar architecture, he insisted in his 1925 public lecture in Tehran that Fath 'Ali Shah's "grotesque and stupid carving of himself" at Ray, after a Sasanian original, "will remain as one of the greatest artistic scandals in the history of the world" (Gluck and Silver 1996: 110). Again lecturing in 1934, he maintained, "Qajars knew nothing and cared nothing for Persia's great tradition in the arts" (Gluck and Silver 1996: 286). Exerting a significant amount of influence on kings and ministers, Pope's scholarship thus adversely impacted the study of post-Safavid art.

It comes as little surprise, then, that since the 1920s, the study of Qajar art and architecture has been generally neglected, in part because of art historians like Pope, in part owing to Nasir al-Din Shah's 1867 sweeping urban reforms in Tehran, and in part to Riza Shah's effort to replace old Persian with Iran-i Novin (New Iran). Most of all, Qajar historiography has suffered because the Orientalist canonical historiography, both inside and outside Pahlavi Iran, argued that after the fall of the Safavids, Persian architecture underwent a shameful decline and hence is unworthy of scholarly attention. In Pope and Ackerman's massive *A Survey of Persian Art* (1939), for instance, the historic examination of Persian art stops with Isfahan's religious school, the Madrasa-yi Madar-i Shah (1714) (Pope and Ackerman 1967: vol. 8, 501–506). Furthermore, Zand and Qajar art remained outside scholarly interests until the 1980s because their stylistic eclecticism did not lend themselves to modernist sensitivities (Grabar 2001).

In Iran, it was not until the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1980 and its political animosity towards Pahlavi history that the study of Zand and Qajar art became relevant. In the United States, the pioneering exhibition, *Royal Persian Paintings, The Qajar Epoch, 1785–1925* (October 1998–January 1999) showcased rarely seen large-scale court and popular religious paintings. Curated by Leyla Diba, it launched a trend in Qajar historiography that has amassed momentum since. That the documentation and archival work related to Qajar art is ideologically less problematic within the Islamic Republic weighs on the choice of topics by scholars; in the last two decades, the accessibility and use of archival materials, including oral histories, *waqf* documents, photographs, and ethnographic objects, has rendered the study of Qajar art viable and rich.

The grandest of all revivalistic endeavors was not, however, made by the Qajars but in October 1971, when the Pahlavi shah, Muhammad Riza, celebrated the 2500-year anniversary of the Persian Empire at the foot of Persepolis. While past kings had been impressed by the site, none had hitherto so conspicuously claimed the Achaemenid legacy. Artistic revival had fully served its political function: two centuries of engagement with the past, forms and rituals enabled the monarch to announce to the world, "O' Cyrus … We have today gathered at thy eternal resting place to say to thee: rest in peace, for We are awake, and will forever stay awake to guard thy proud heritage."[5] In 1979, only moments later in historical time, a grassroots revolution rendered the longstanding tradition of Persian kingship a matter of history.

Notes

1 Religion and Nationalism. *Iranshahr*, 2, December 1924, pp. 41–42.
2 Dr. Taqi Arani. *Mahnameh-i Mardom*, 5, June 1960, p. 1.
3 Foroughi, M.A. (1924). *Tarikh-e Mokhtasar-e Iran*. Tehran, pp. 2–3.
4 Nafisi, S. (15 March 1953). Notre But. *Le Journal de Téhéran*, 1, p. 1.
5 Aryanpure, A. (1975). *A Translation of the Historic Speeches of His Imperial Majesty Shahanshah Aryamehr*. Tehran, p. 50.

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42

Public Sphere in the Eastern Mediterranean

Shirine Hamadeh

In the eastern Mediterranean as elsewhere in the world, the history of the public sphere was inextricably connected to the greater levels of social mobility, urbanization, and modernization that marked the history of cities between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. Contemporaries invariably recognized these connections. They associated, often disapprovingly, the emergence of new spaces of sociability to new habits of consumption and recreation, the formation of social classes, or the increasing popularization of politics, depending on the time, place, and circumstance. For early modern state officials and historians of the Ottoman court like Ibrahim Peçevi (d. 1650) or Mustafa Naima (d. 1716), the coffeehouses of Istanbul represented a disintegration of the social and moral order because they facilitated the mixing of ranks and sanctioned people's participation in political discussion. The mid-eighteenth-century Damascene barber and chronicler Ahmad Ibn Budayr (d. 1762) balked at the sight of public gardens swarming with women picnicking alongside men and emulating their smoking habits (Grehan 2006: 1356). Intellectuals such as the Egyptian Rifʿat Tahtawi (d. 1873) recognized the political potential of nascent cultural institutions such as the theatre in the 1830s already, long before theatres were hailed by Arab newspapers and municipalities as major venues of social reform and became forums around which discontented workers in Beirut and Cairo organized (Khury-Makdisi 2010: 60–93).

It is unlikely that Jürgen Habermas, on whose work contemporary conceptualizations of the "public sphere" are generally based, would consider such manifestations as sufficient bases for political action. Nor would he judge Beirut's workers' capacity for insurgence to be as consequential to the development of a public sphere as the rational political debates that educated bourgeois men conducted in contemporary London. But these manifestations gathered enough subversive momentum

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to be perceived by the central state, local authorities, intellectuals or ordinary people as genuinely threatening – for various reasons at different times. Critically or enthusiastically, what Ibn Budayr, Naima, and Tahtawi noted in each case was the same inevitable reality: times, people, practices, and ideas were changing, and these changes were being publicly expressed in coffeehouses, public gardens, and theatres through new social experiences and practices that these spaces encouraged.

When after the Ottoman state's modernizing reforms (*Tanzimat*) of the 1840s, bolder ideals of social equality and national sovereignty gained momentum and circulated across the empire thanks to the rising modern press, the significance of these spaces in shaping a public sphere intensified. But the existence of a public realm that facilitated both new forms of social encounters and the expression of political opinions well predated modern developments. Whether in 1650 or in 1915, sociability and dissent were persistent topics addressed in contemporary accounts of coffeehouses, taverns, bathhouses, public parks, urban squares, or theatres, whether in Istanbul, Izmir, Salonika, Aleppo, Damascus, or Cairo.

It is therefore not surprising that the subject of the public sphere in the eastern Mediterranean has attracted far more interest among social historians than it has among architectural historians. For the early modern period especially, the latter have been hampered by scant visual and architectural evidence of mostly transitory spaces such as gardens, squares, coffeehouses, and taverns and guided by a relative disdain of the non-monumental and vernacular. A few studies of the architecture of individual baths and coffeehouses have certainly helped redress the gap. But ultimately, the significance of public places lies in the conjunction of their architectural, urban, social, and cultural dimensions; and a full appreciation of this requires a simultaneous examination of the architectural, urban, social, and cultural realities of these spaces. This has been demonstrated by urban and architectural historians like Özkoçak (2007) and Zandi-Sayek (2012). Their work has highlighted the necessity of adopting multidisciplinary tools of investigation to make new use of available sources – from *waqf* (endowment) deeds to state archives and narrative accounts, and the wealth of new institutional, municipal, and visual records that modern Ottoman bureaucracy, technology, and motivations produced from the mid-nineteenth century on.

The first two sections of this chapter focus on the two most recurring motifs of contemporary accounts of public spaces, sociability and dissent. The third section dwells on the significance of public spaces, specifically, as an indispensable institution of modernity after the 1840s.

Spaces of Sociability

Historians agree that coffeehouses became the single most important arenas of urban life in early modern Ottoman cities soon after their introduction in the sixteenth century, first to the Hijaz and Cairo by way of Yemen and eventually to the capital Istanbul in the 1550s by two merchants from Aleppo and Damascus. By the latter half of the seventeenth century coffeehouses had spread to all four corners of the empire: Istanbul and Cairo each boasted more than 600 coffeehouses, Aleppo, over 100, and even small towns like Safed in the Galilee and Eğrigöz in northwestern Anatolia claimed a few (Kafadar 2014: 253; Kırlı 2000: 35; Tuchscherer 1997: 92). Located in and outside the walled cities, in commercial quarters, *khan*s, *wikala*s (caravanserais), marketplaces, and residential neighborhoods, they ranged from sumptuous establishments to modest structures, down to small makeshift street setups (*koltuk kahvesi*). The grandest ones were those most often admired by their contemporaries. The splendid Tophane Coffeehouse, built in the eighteenth century along the Bosphorus shore, in Tophane across the Istanbul peninsula, was immortalized in an engraving by the French architect and Istanbul resident, Antoine-Ignace Melling (Figure 42.1). A vast airy space with an ornate furnace on the side, it boasted an exclusive seating section for state officials and city and religious notables, slightly raised from the ground and furnished with divans arranged around a fountain. With its coffered ceiling framed by a painted cornice, its walls decorated with elegant cartouches

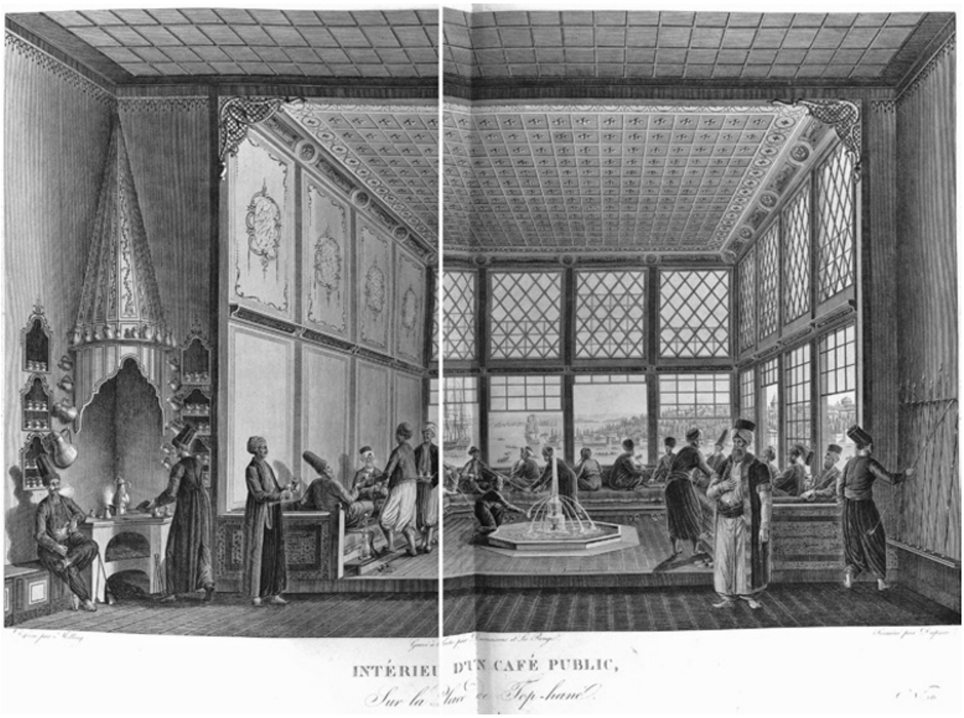

Figure 42.1 Tophane Coffeehouse, Istanbul, by Antoine-Ignace Melling. Source: Melling, A.-I. (1809–1819). *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et du Bosphore*. Paris: Treuttel & Würtz. Reproduced with permission.

and floral motifs, and the magnificent views it afforded of the Sea of Marmara and the imperial palace, it exuded a sense of the style and luxury characteristic of contemporary waterfront mansions.

Equally opulent but far more imposing was the much older coffeehouse of Ipşir Pasha, governor of Aleppo, founded in 1656 as part of the governor's commercial *waqf* in the city's business center. This was one of Aleppo's most outstanding buildings. It was erected at the southwestern end of the complex, an exquisitely carved street façade singling it out from the complex's enclosure (Figure 42.2). Its immense hall, said to have accommodated hundreds of people, was covered with domes and vaults of varying sizes surrounding a larger lanterned dome. Like the Tophane Coffeehouse, it contained a raised seated area for the city's notables. To the north, it opened onto an iwan and a courtyard centered around a pool, an arrangement echoing the domed winter *qaʿa* (enclosed reception room) and summer iwan/courtyard typical of wealthy urban residences (David 1997: 113–123; Watenpaugh 2004: 161–165).

Such luxurious establishments were not, as visual and architectural evidence might suggest, restricted to an elite clientele. Textual sources indicate that they attracted customers from across the social spectrum, allowing for inter-class interactions otherwise discouraged by the strict Ottoman social order. Still, for most city folks, far more popular were the hundreds of humble coffeehouses that dotted the neighborhood streets – the *mahalle kahvehaneleri* of Istanbul, *qahawi* and *qahwakhana*s of Damascus and Aleppo and *buyut qahwa* of Cairo – and of which

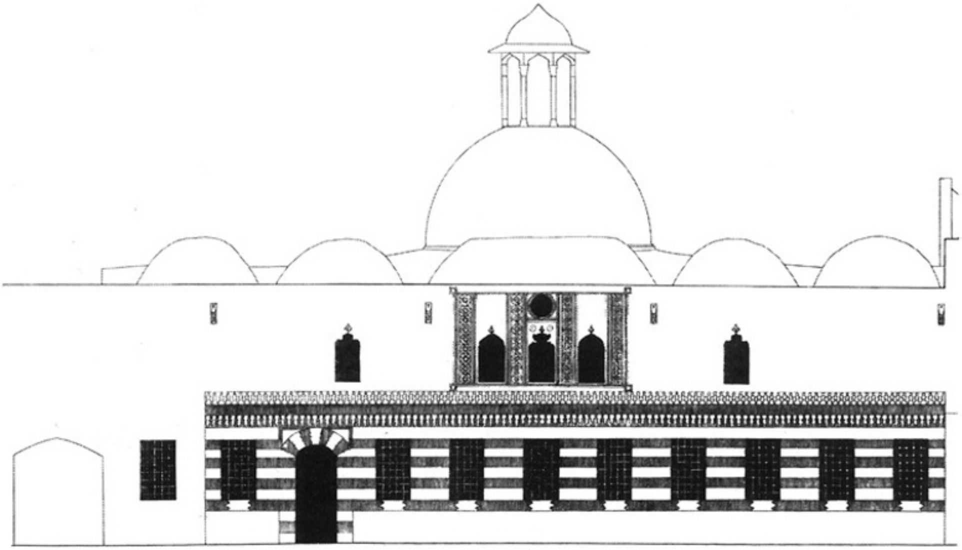

Figure 42.2 Coffeehouse of Ipşir Pasha, Aleppo, street side elevation. Source: David, J.-C. (1982). *Le waqf d'Ipšīr Pāšā à Alep (1063/1653): Etude d'urbanisme historique.* Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, plate 25. Reproduced with permission.

virtually nothing survives today, except for occasional references in contemporary accounts or *waqf* records. While those situated in the hustle and bustle of commercial neighborhoods were often housed in the masonry structures of *khan*s or *wikala*s, most neighborhood coffeehouses were simple wooden structures. They varied in layout and degree of embellishment but shared some standard features: An open space (*orta* or *maydan*), sometimes with a fountain in the center, a furnace (*ocak* or *qanun*) with coffee-making equipment on one side, a line of divans along one or two walls, a few carpets or low stools all around and usually, at an angle with the furnace or right across from it, a raised platform (*başsedir*) restricted to neighborhood elders, imams, and notables (Özkoçak 2007: 979, fig. 5). Many venues offered live evening entertainment, which required the addition of a raised seat for the performer, usually by the furnace.

In early modern cities, where people spent the greatest part of their time in and around their neighborhood, coffeehouses must have been the most obvious places for men to gather outside the home, especially during holidays and long Ramadan nights. That the neighborhood coffeehouse was like an extension of the home is an argument that several scholars have advanced and that habits such as dropping in wearing one's house robe or taking off one's shoes at the threshold certainly support (David 1997: 125–126; Georgeon 1997a: 44; Özkoçak 2007: 976–978). But one could also argue that it was the most public forum of everyday life, an extension rather of the neighborhood street, a snug slice of it at once public and comfortingly convivial.

The relative popularity of a coffeehouse and nature of its clientele depended on several factors: the city itself, the neighborhood, location, entertainment variety, and even the owner's identity. Neighborhood coffeehouses in Salonika, for example, were less religiously inclusive than those of Istanbul, although in the capital too some places, as in Yeni Kapı, drew specific ethno-religious populations or different groups on different days of the week (Georgeon 1997a: 50). Coffeehouses located in the *khan*s of Istanbul, Damascus, and Aleppo and *wikala*s of Cairo sometimes catered to members of a specific guild, although on the whole, those situated in the commercial neighborhoods attracted men from across occupational, social, ethnic, and religious groups. Aside from a broad middle class of artisans and merchants who worked in the vicinity they brought in migrant workers and day laborers, who knew these were the places where they were likely to land their next job, and janissary troops, especially in Istanbul and Damascus where janissaries increasingly penetrated the socioeconomic fabric and either owned or were generally associated with coffeehouses (Çaksu 2007: 117–131; Deguilhem 1997: 130; Sunar 2006: 114–117). In fact, from the perspective of the state, by the middle of the seventeenth century coffeehouses in Istanbul were nesting grounds for the unemployed, the riffraff, and demobilized soldiers (Kırlı 2000: 38–49).

While coffeehouses encouraged unique forms of social interaction and companionship that became fundamental components of male sociability, social life outside the home occurred in other public places as well. Taverns (*meyhane, şerbethane*), many of which offered meals and musical and dance entertainment, had long been a fixture of the male landscape of socialization and continued to thrive, mostly outside city walls, away from residences and in predominantly non-Muslim neighborhoods. Not that religious prohibitions on wine and alcoholic substances necessarily barred Muslim men from patronizing these venues. Countless unlicensed makeshift versions (*koltuk meyhane*) continually mushroomed in cities' back alleys, in backrooms of grocers and barber shops, and even in residential tenements. Besides, *bozahane*s, which specialized in the preparation and consumption of a fermented barley drink, were usually located in busy commercial quarters within the walled city (Özkoçak 2007: 971).

Social interaction also took place in spaces not specifically dedicated to leisure but that doubled up as forums of sociability. For women and children, especially, the cemeteries and orchards in the cities' outskirts substituted as picnic spots and playgrounds, while centrally situated marketplaces, neighborhood fountains, and sweets and candy shops remained favorite spots for women to meet and linger about. From the eighteenth century on, the possibility of renting a horse-drawn carriage facilitated the mobility of those with higher means, and "cruising" in a carriage became a fashionable recreation, as well as the target of new sumptuary laws and moralizing discourses.

But the nexus of women's sociability was always the public bathhouse. For Lady Mary Montagu (d. 1762) and other foreign travelers in Istanbul, Aleppo, or Damascus, *hammam*s were major centers for the exchange of news and gossip, the equivalents of men's barbershops and coffeehouses (Georgeon 1997a: 57). They were particularly popular during the month of Ramadan, when like coffeehouses they remained opened through much of the night (Marcus 1989: 231). This was the month of the year when mosque courtyards, which had always served as venues of male conviviality, came fully alive in the evenings – a feature that took on less gendered proportions with the later creation of markets-cum-fairs (*sergiler*) in many mosque courtyards on Ramadan nights (Georgeon 1997b: 59).

Still, one could argue that coffeehouses had the most profound impact on the formation of a public sphere. Unlike taverns and *boza* houses they were profoundly multidimensional and multifunctional, and less about the consumption of substances than about rituals of conversation and camaraderie. As the famous verse went, "The heart yearns for companionship/Coffee is a pretext" (*Gönül bir dost ister/Kahve bahane*). Men from often different walks of life gathered in a coffeehouse to talk about personal, neighborhood and political matters, play a game of chess or backgammon, and get a clean shave, a tooth pulled, or money transacted (Georgeon 1997a: 43). Poets read their verses aloud, imams and elders announced neighborhood news, recent migrants reached for employers or a temporary shelter, and at least in Istanbul and Damascus, janissaries got together and, more than once, organized uprisings and rebellions.

Significantly too, coffeehouses addressed the exigencies of early modern urban life, giving structure and spatial and experiential focus to a burgeoning public culture. Soon after their introduction to Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, Istanbul, and Salonika, shadow-puppet theatre (*karagöz, karakoz, karagiozis*) and storytellers' (*meddah, hakawati, afigitís*) performances that had been traditionally held on street corners and in public gardens began to find in coffeehouses receptive platforms for their shows and for the kind of political and social satire that shadowplays, in particular, popularized through witty parodies of state officials and all sorts of social types. Several coffeehouses became central venues of organized evening entertainment, encouraging "new regimes of temporality that redefined the spheres of work and leisure" (Kafadar 2014: 244) and resetting the parameters of age and gender in coffeehouses, as women and children became part of their evening clienteles. Accounts of Cairene early modern life suggest that the habit of going to the same coffeehouse on the same evening of the week to hear a favorite storyteller was relatively widespread and peaked during the month of Ramadan, when some establishments hosted performances on regular bases (Tuchscherer 1997: 92–111). In many ways, these consumption-cum-entertainment establishments prefigured the nineteenth-century café-concerts (*çalgılı* or *semai kahvehane*) of Istanbul, Izmir, and Salonika, which featured small music ensembles and a repertoire of folk poetry (Georgeon 1997a: 61–62) and the later European-style (*alla franga*) cafés that became a staple of modern urban squares and boulevards, such as Burj Square in Beirut and the Grande Rue de Péra in Istanbul.

The institution's ability to respond to the changing necessities of urban life had always been behind the success story of the coffeehouse. Their fast proliferation in new public gardens and squares of Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul testified to this. In Cairo, coffeehouses began to mushroom around the pond of Azbakiyya when in the seventeenth century European consuls and merchants residing there began to operate a select public park. Subsequently, other wealthy Cairene and European residents opened their private gardens to public access, endowing them with coffeehouses. These continued to multiply along the shores of Azbakiyya and the bridges connecting the two banks of the Halig (Canal), reaching a total of 1000 by the end of the eighteenth century (Behrens-Abouseif 1985: 42–71). Similar developments unfolded in Damascus and Istanbul. New coffeehouses cropped up along the River Barada just as the gardens along its shores were turning into hot spots for picnics and excursions among Damascene residents (Deguilhem 1997: 127–133). In Istanbul, the still famous coffee terraces of Emirgan, Beylerbeyi, and Küçüksu on the two banks of the Bosphorus channel were created in the second half of the eighteenth century as the culture of garden recreation boomed all along the suburban waterfront (Hamadeh 2007: 113–123). By then, public gardens had become a distinguishing feature of the landscape of many cities of the eastern Mediterranean. For the Damascene scholar Ibn Kannan, Damascus was but a vast garden for the city dwellers to enjoy. His chronicle, which reads as a "picnic-guide" of the city, described the fashionable gardens of al-Jabha on the Barada as shaded by weeping willows and walnut trees, dotted with pools, ponds, fountains and waterwheels, crowded with ambulant sellers of kebab, *mezze*, fruits and ice-cream, and offering even blankets, mattresses, pillows, and pots and pans for those who wished to spend the night (Sajdi 2011: 17). In paintings and engravings by local and foreign artists the gardens of Istanbul were portrayed in similar terms: vast and informally laid out spaces, shaded with walnut, chestnut and plane trees and furnished with a grand fountain and coffeehouse terraces, where men and women picnicked, smoked, drank, lounged, chatted, strolled, boated, played music and danced, and where children rode swings and ran around (Hamadeh 2007: 110–113).

Images and textual descriptions leave no doubt as to the impact of these gardens on their urban fabrics and the democratization of the leisure sphere. What observers mostly noted was the intensity of the public life that unfolded in these spaces, their social diversity, and the noticeable presence of women among their participants. These phenomena were both applauded and condemned. Unlike Ibn Kannan, his two eighteenth-century contemporaries, the barber Ibn Budayr and the Greek-Orthodox priest Mikhail Burayk, were horrified at the sight of Damascus's overcrowded gardens, particularly in the area of al-Salihiyya. They found the novel habit of lingering out for hours of the day and the night completely appalling, and the overwhelming presence of women smoking, drinking coffee, and mingling with men, simply disgraceful (Grehan 2006: 1356). Similar condemnations were voiced in Istanbul and echoed by the state in the form of sumptuary regulations, while poets such as Nedim (d. 1730) and Enderunlu Fazıl (d. 1810) continued to celebrate the gardens of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, especially those of Emirgan, Göksu, and Kağıthane, as their city's most vibrant public arenas (Hamadeh 2007: 139–170).

As was the case in Cairo's Azbakiyya, many public gardens had once been private gardens that later opened their gates to the public. In Aleppo landowners sometimes opened their orchards, in exchange for a small fee, to groups of families and friends who organized picnics and holiday celebrations, often hiring musicians and dancers for the occasion. People with higher means could rent an entire garden for the day, a practice that was also fashionable in eighteenth-century Cairo (Marcus 1989: 230–231). In Istanbul, as new magnificent imperial gardens were being constructed along the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, older ones lost their appeal as foci of court life and frequently, as in Küçüksu, had their pavilions renovated and their grounds made accessible to the public. Frequently, the establishment of a charitable endowment in an older imperial garden led to the creation of public promenades. When in 1763–1764 Mustafa III founded a small mosque complex in the former garden of Bayezid II at Sultaniye, located in modern Paşabahçe, along the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, the public fountain in the complex became the locus of a new public garden – a "*luogo di pubblico divertimento*" (a site of public recreation) in the words of the Armenian chronicler Inciciyan (Hamadeh 2007: 117).

Public (*miri*) lands reclaimed from the state after their tenants had fallen from imperial grace could follow the same course. The hugely popular garden of Emirgan, on the European side of the Bosphorus, developed on grounds that formerly belonged to a *şeyhülislam* and were absorbed by Abdülhamid I in 1781 into the imperial *waqf*. The sultan endowed the site with a new imperial mosque, a public bath, several shops, and a public fountain across the mosque's courtyard, which became the focal point of a vast garden that stretched all the way to the shore, landscaped with lime, plane and acacia trees and furnished with coffee terraces (Figure 42.3) (Hamadeh 2007: 114–122).

According to contemporary chroniclers, the popularity of a public garden was measured by the kinds of amusements, activities, and services it offered. The variety of ambulant sellers and sleeping accommodations at the garden of al-Jabha made it one of the most attractive public venues of Damascus. In Istanbul, the prospects of renting a boat and cruising along the stream while gazing at the neighboring imperial palace of Saʿdabad gave the old garden of Kağıthane unprecedented popularity. And Tophane Square outside the Galata walls became a fashionable public place after Mahmud I built his monumental freestanding fountain there in 1732, and outdoor coffee terraces began to flourish around it. The fountain of Mahmud I at Tophane was but one of the most magnificent of the

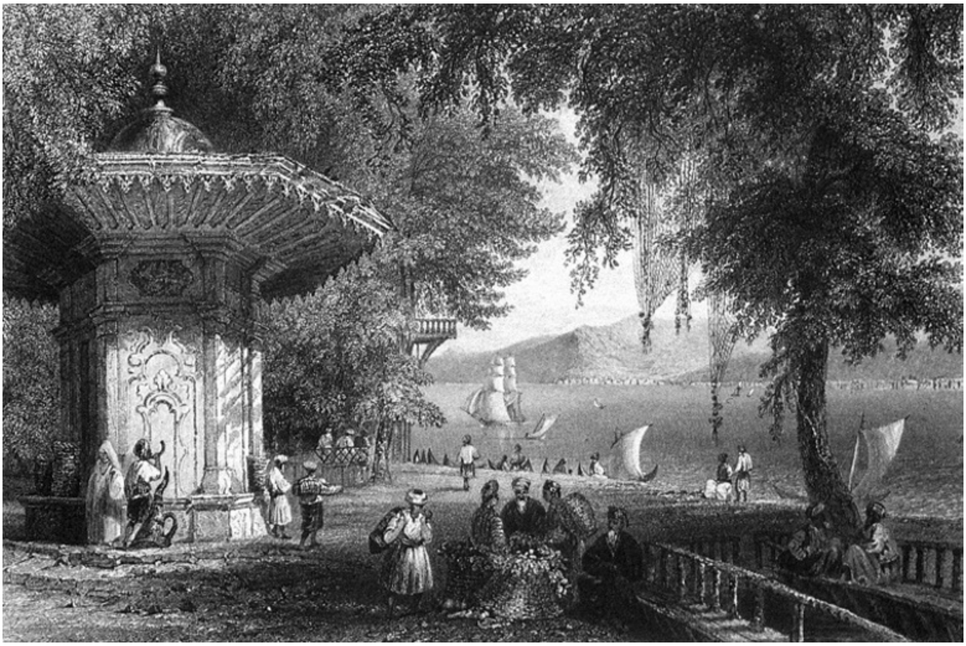

FIGURE 42.3 Public garden and fountain at Emirgan, by William Bartlett after an engraving by J. Cousen. Source: Pardoe, J. (1838). *Beauties of the Bosphorus*. London: G. Virtue. Reproduced with permission.

hundreds of new *meydan çeşmeleri* (lit. public square fountains), the most dramatic formal transformation of Ottoman fountains to that date. Oversized, freestanding, topped with a projecting pyramidal or mushroom-shaped roof, those sponsored by the imperial and ruling class wore superb revetment in delicately carved, gilded, and painted marble surfaces that displayed, appropriately, a largely floral iconography, both abstract and naturalistic. Unlike their predecessors the new fountains were not tucked in the wall enclosures of mosques and madrasas – institutions to which they had traditionally been connected – but prominently displayed in open squares and gardens as the new loci and emblems of outdoor urban life (Hamadeh 2007: 83–109). They were key to bringing visual, audial, tactile, and gustatory pleasures to the world of outdoor recreational sociability and were, in this respect, paradigmatic of the new architecture of public spaces that took shape in the eighteenth century in Istanbul and across the eastern Mediterranean, from Cairo to the island of Chios, to Samokov in Bulgaria, and Sarajevo.

Spaces of Dissent

Still today, much of the significance of public spaces derives from their ability to respond to and bolster new forms of social interaction; but their claim to fame lies mainly in their capacity to galvanize public life. The subversive role of Cairo's Tahrir Square and Istanbul's Gezi Park as popular platforms for political expression, contestation, resistance, and rebellion against the authorities has recently turned these places into universal household names, although they were born over 150 years earlier out of more innocuous modern expectations of middle-class leisure and public health. To those unfamiliar with the eastern Mediterranean urban landscape, these names have encapsulated, indeed provided a tangible spatial dimension to Egypt's "Arab Spring" revolution and Turkish anti-government protests, respectively.

From our modern perspective, it may seem futile to compare the significance of Tahrir Square and Gezi Park to, for example, the public gardens of eighteenth-century Istanbul, which had served as stages for women to defy normative ethics of public behavior and sartorial codes. Yet for the Ottoman state at the time, such seemingly minor socio-moral breaches, mostly intuitive and individual, constituted seditious acts that facilitated the destabilization of order. In their small way, they were acts of resistance and rebellion against the authorities and potentially conducive to the formation of new identities. In other words, the role of today's public spaces as venues for resistance to or challenge of the moral, social, economic, or political order has a long early modern history of precedents that was told and retold by both critics and enthusiasts of change.

In this respect, the existence of a women's public sphere merits highlighting. Contraventions in public dress were, after all, no less than expressions of women's emergent consciousness of a public identity. The remarkable fashion innovations that occurred suddenly after nearly two centuries of minor sartorial changes and were featured in eighteenth-century costume albums and portraits by the eighteenth-century Ottoman painters Levni and Buhari further testify to this (Bağcı *et al.* 2010: 267–283). Extravagant hats, hair worn loose, daring *décolletés*, and excessive collars that violated the traditional dress code were products of changing consumption habits and suggested a more lackadaisical attitude toward social and religious categories and the sumptuary rules that governed them. They were meant for public display and were defiantly paraded in the gardens of Kağıthane, Küçüksu, Beykoz, and Üsküdar, as chroniclers and conservative onlookers watched in dismay. The eighteenth-century court historian Küçük Çelebizade expressed his outrage at the impudence of women's outfits and demeanors at Kağıthane. The chronicler Şemdanizade (d. 1779) applauded the state's efforts to enforce the law and punish individual offenders, "to not only reform women's dress but also mend their souls" (Hamadeh 2007: 131).

The eighteenth-century state responded to the changes by decreeing new sumptuary rules of public garden behavior in Istanbul, redefining acceptable parameters of sociability and dictating the terms by which garden recreation could take place. Sultanic edicts regulated gender separation, banned activities like carriage rides and boat excursions that facilitated the mixing of the sexes, shut popular gardens such as those of Beykoz and Üsküdar, and even barred women from visiting gardens altogether. In Damascus, conspicuously new behavioral patterns in public gardens, such as women's frequent and prolonged excursions, upset men's moral standards and were repeatedly prohibited by local authorities. Chroniclers of daily life in Aleppo pointed to the moral degeneration that public gardens fostered among their women and condemned them, together with bathhouses, for facilitating the formation of a women's public sphere. Around the middle of the eighteenth century, the city's governor ordered new restrictions on women's garden trips, limiting them to Mondays and Thursdays and banning them completely in periods of turmoil (Marcus 1989: 231).

If in the eighteenth century, public gardens became the new target of sumptuary law and individual criticism, coffeehouses, taverns and bathhouses had suffered a longer history of prohibitions and denunciations. These always intensified in times of crisis, when changes in social configurations became more noticeable and genuine fears of the collapse of the moral order escalated. The case of coffeehouses in seventeenth-century Istanbul has often been highlighted in this regard, as moralists became more articulate in their condemnation of an institution that in their minds was hurling the empire into straight decline. Criticism varied and changed with time but oscillated around three practices deemed integral to coffeehouse culture: social heterogeneity, idleness, and popular political discourse, the latter becoming eventually the single-most culprit (Kırlı 2000: 54–66). By the end of the seventeenth century the court historian Naima put it clearly: coffeehouses were but pretexts for the lower orders to meet and criticize the ruling elite and spread lies by discussing state matters in which they had no business at all.

Chatter about state affairs, or *devlet sohbeti* as the state called it, became the chief justification for its repeated orders to shut down coffeehouses in the capital – a practice that peaked especially under Murad IV (r. 1623–1640). By the eighteenth century the authorities were regularly dispatching spies to monitor coffeehouse (as well as bathhouse and garden) conversations in the aim of punishing those deemed to perpetrate seditious rumors, and after the 1830s, in the more characteristically modern spirit of covert information gathering (Kırlı 2000: 181–285).

Arguably, the coffeehouse predicament was more acute in the Ottoman capital, probably because sociopolitical unpredictability was felt there more forcefully. In Cairo, only the Danish traveler Carsten Niebuhr, who journeyed in the city in the early 1760s, was tuned to the potentially subversive dimension of coffeehouses as centers of political news, rumors, and state criticism (Tuchscherer 1997: 110). In Aleppo, coffeehouses were deplored mainly because they encouraged debauched behavior and made alcohol available to their customers. Yet, there was one aspect of coffeehouses' subversive culture that never failed to be noted by foreign observers, namely, the satirical shadow-play performances of Karagöz and Hacivat. The English traveler Russell recounted, for example, how after failure in the Ottoman–Russian campaign of 1768, Karagöz mounted a mocking performance of the returning janissaries to the wild delight of Aleppine audiences (Marcus 1989: 235). This was a very old form of entertainment in the eastern Mediterranean. But it was only with the multiplication of coffeehouses in most major cities after the 1550s that shadow-theatre became a vital component of the flourishing urban culture and, increasingly, a subject of controversy, confirming the capacity of coffeehouses to act as platforms for popular subversion.

Beyond their role as venues for the expression of social critique and political opinion, public places also facilitated active forms of mobilization and insurgency. In Damascus the very idea of coffeehouses raised suspicious eyebrows because of their perceived association with the janissaries; for some, this accounted for their limited numbers by comparison with other major cities (Deguilhem 1997: 127–133). In Istanbul, numerous establishments were owned by janissaries and became back-up reserves in times of rebellions, as they served mainly their patrons' messes, including the gang-leader types among them, labor migrants, and unemployed men (Çaksu 2007: 128–131; Kırlı 2000: 112–127). When the Patrona Halil revolt erupted in 1730, insurgents ran to coffeehouses, *boza* houses, and bathhouses looking for support among artisans, shopkeepers, and migrant workers. In July 1808, when the janissaries organized their assault on the palace of grand vizier Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, they went to coffeehouses to rally more men among the migrants and disenfranchised; the latter quickly obliged, rushing out with axes and butcher knives (Sunar 2006: 114–117). Throughout the reign of Selim III (1789–1807), efforts to shut down coffeehouses were mainly guided by the janissaries' close connections with these establishments. And when Mahmud II abolished the troops in 1826, many coffeehouses in Istanbul were temporarily closed from fear they would foster popular upheavals (Georgeon 1997a: 40–41).

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the association between public space and popular dissent acquired a new significance, which can only be read in the context of the social and political exigencies of modern life. Several new public squares and gardens and cultural institutions emerged out of the Ottoman state's ambitious project of modernity that followed the proclamation of the western-style *Tanzimat* modernization reforms in the 1840s. Though essentially created to stage symbolic performances of imperial authority, they became mostly associated with resistance, revolution, political freedom, social equality, and national independence, among other slogans of modern life. In today's collective memory, Beirut's Sahat al-Burj and Damascus's Sahat al-Marja, two "modern" municipal squares and hubs of bourgeois recreation created in the late 1870s, are both remembered as "Martyrs' Square" (*Sahat al-Shuhada*) for having staged public executions of Arab nationalists in August 1915 and May 1916, respectively, by order of the Ottoman governor of Syria, Cemal Pasha. Midan al-Tahrir (Liberation Square) in Cairo began as an emblem of the city's modernization, eponymously named Midan al-Ismailiyya after its creator, the khedive Ismaʿil, but turned into a symbol of Egyptian revolution and liberation, first in 1919, then again in 1952, and most recently in 2011. Likewise, Salonika's Olympus Square, a late nineteenth-century development that followed the demolition of the city's sea wall, was renamed Plateia Eleftherias, or Liberty Square, shortly after the Young Turk Revolution in July 1908 (Anastassiadou 1997: 410–413).

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the rapidly expanding press played an important part in underscoring the political role of public spaces, circulating across the empire emergent ideals of social reform, public good, and civilization, or various aspirations of national sovereignty that were being expressed on the ground. This made public spaces an even greater threat to the established order. The coffeehouses of Istanbul were now being spied upon not in the aim of punishing so-called perpetrators of rumors but to gather bits of public opinion for and against the state (Kırlı 2000: 245–285). New institutions like the theatre (and later the cinema) compounded the potential for subversive action "as a genre and as a space"; theatres were scrutinized, their repertoires checked and censored, and sometimes their doors shut, as was the case in Egypt in 1874 (Khury-Makdisi 2010: 75–76, 86). As their popularity peaked at the beginning of the twentieth century in places like Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria, many became creative platforms for the circulation of reformist or radical ideas through overtly political productions, as with the staging of plays across Arab cities in 1908 about the Young Turk Revolution. Moreover, in their capacity as public *spaces* for interaction and exchange, theatres became favorite venues for forthright manifestations of social and political dissent among workers and unions. While in Salonika in the 1900s workers organized in the city's new municipal gardens – most famously in Beshchinar (Anastassiadou 1997: 417), in Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria disgruntled workers and labor unions met in theatres to hold meetings and organize strikes (Khury-Makdisi 2010: 82–160). The connections that emerged out of these events, as between the Cigarette Workers' Association and Tiyatro Adnan (Adnan Theatre) in Alexandria (in 1902), were fundamental to the construction of a working class. This was modern theatre's unique contribution, in that it provided a public space for the circulation of bourgeois nationalist or radical ideas and for the formation of a "working class public sphere" (Khury-Makdisi 2010: 73–75, 86).

Spaces of Modernity

It is important to bear in mind that the new theatres, gardens, and squares were born out of a language of modern urbanism that was central to the Ottoman project of modernity. For Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) especially, public architecture and urban development became crucial representations of the image of his modern, centralized, and unified (albeit much-reduced) empire. His photographic albums, which recorded every road, port, and railroad and nearly every theatre, opera house, bank, park, and train station he sponsored across the provinces, from Beirut and Damascus to Salonika, give a palpable sense of the speed and intensity with which urbanization and modernization projects unfolded under his reign; and they remain the most eloquent visual archive of the homogenizing spirit of modern architecture (Library of Congress *c.* 1893).

As historians have shown in recent years, however, modernity in eastern Mediterranean cities was far from a top-down, single-handed project initiated by the central state. The local intellectual, bureaucratic, and financial elites of cities like Beirut, Istanbul, or Izmir and emergent institutions, like municipalities and the multilingual press, all partook of this process. Themes that dominated the official *Tanzimat* discourse, such as civilization and progress, also dominated local debates in places like Beirut, Cairo, Alexandria, and Izmir. And they incited convergences and differences among various groups and interests, usually in the form of newspapers' publications about the modern city, public health, public space, public good, and urban order (Zandi-Sayek 2012: 75–149). By the 1880s, when the first efforts at modern urban planning began, issues of public hygiene and the public good (*al-maslaha al-ʿamma*) filled the pages of Beirut's periodicals such as *Hadikat ul-Akhbar* and *Lisan ul-Hal* (Hanssen 2005: 84–137, 213–224). The subject of urban improvements had been contested in the local gazettes of Izmir since the 1840s; and notices and opinions about specific projects and ordinary citizens' complaints about street encroachment, pavement, or urban security all found a platform in such newspapers as Damascus's *Al-Muqtabas* and Salonika's *Journal de Salonique* (Anastassiadou 1997: 152–200; Zandi-Sayek 2012: 101–111). For many, physical order correlated with civilized society; and the press was instrumental in driving the point home.

It was around that time that public spaces became understood as a space for the common good to be privileged over private interests and that they became integral to state and city discourses on progress, civilization, and modernization (Zandi-Sayek 2012: 101–111). Urban squares and gardens became the most conspicuous visual markers of the modern Ottoman state. Newly built governmental buildings converged around them, while they provided stages for public rituals of imperial power (most famously in 1901, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Abdülhamid's reign) and spectacles of sovereign order (most infamously, the public hangings of 1915 and 1916 in Beirut and Damascus, respectively) (Hanssen 2005: 240–241). As urban development projects, the new gardens and squares fundamentally shifted cities' centers of gravity. Sahat al-Burj in Beirut and Sahat al-Marja in Damascus originally lay at the periphery of their respective cities, outside the medieval walls, and became city centers only in the late 1870s, during the first concerted efforts at urban planning that followed the demolition of city walls. In their reincarnation as nodes for governmental, financial, and touristic institutions they re-centered the two cities along the new regional Beirut–Damascus highway that connected them (Hanssen 2005: 240–243, 255–260). Sahat al-Marja, begun during the governorship of the reformist Midhat Pasha in 1878 and completed in 1892, stood along the River Barada and was conceived as a monumental square surrounded by administrative, legal, police, technological, and financial institutions of Ottoman modernity: the palace of justice, the police headquarters, the Ottoman Bank, the post office and the municipality, as well as the imperial *saray*, the emblem of empire. Before long, new cafés, shops, theatres, and hotels began to crop up around the square, turning it into a central recreational area for tourists and the Damascene middle classes (Arnaud 2006: 151–155, 162–168).

Beirut's Burj Square evolved out of a similar diversity of functions and multiplicity of meanings. In 1879, these former gardens of the seventeenth-century palace of Fakhreddine II Maan (d. 1635) were repurposed by the Municipal Council as a public square and garden to serve as the physical locus of the local and provincial government (Figure 42.4). Burj's main architectural feature, designed by the chief architect of the province, Beshara Efendi, and inaugurated in great pomp in 1884, stood at the northern end: It was the so-called Petit Serail, which housed the new municipality and the local office of the governor of Syria (eventually changing hands as the status of Beirut evolved). By 1892, major modern institutions like the Ottoman Bank and post office were established around the square.

While Sahat al-Burj undoubtedly served its role as emblem of Ottoman modernity and state power, however, for most city dwellers it was principally a venue for leisure and recreation. Like Sahat al-Marja, it quickly became a magnet for new shops, cafés, hotels, and theatres. The introduction of modern amenities such as street gas-lighting in 1887, of attractions like horse-drawn carriages to hire for a cruise around the square, and of transportation facilities, like the creation in 1907 of a new tramway stop, only intensified the role of the square as Beirut's foremost recreational space (Hanssen 2005: 100–104). From the start, the project had been planned with a notion of respectable leisure in mind. Its focal point was the

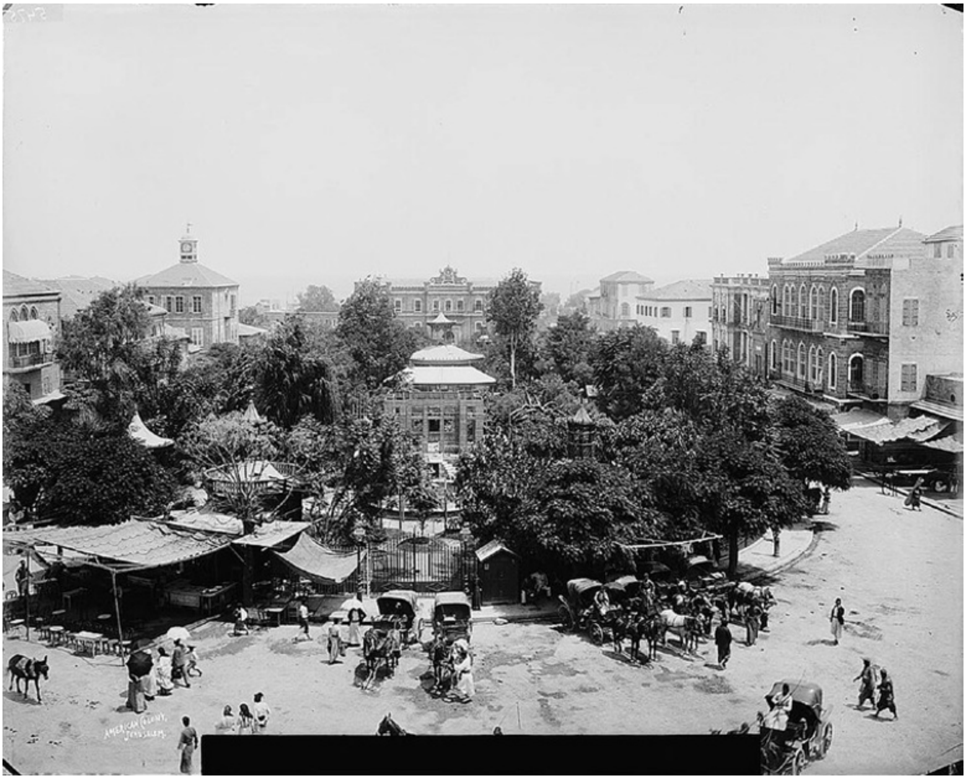

FIGURE 42.4 Photograph showing Sahat al-Burj in Beirut, *c.* 1898–1914. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs, Matson Photograph Collection.

public garden of Hamidiyye, named eponymously after the sultan and completed in the same year as the Serail in 1884, and the first of a handful of municipal public parks created in Beirut between the 1880s and 1900s – including the still surviving garden of Sanayiʿ, across from the new School of Arts and Crafts. As with most urban parks in those years, Hamidiyye Garden was partly a response to modern-times concerns about public health. Initiated by the president of Beirut's municipality, Ibrahim Fakhri, and funded in part by local notables, it was designed by Beshara Efendi as a lush landscape of flowers and eucalyptus trees interrupted by winding alleyways and symmetrically laid out around a pagoda-like kiosk flanked by a pool on either side. By 1883, a more exclusive gated garden, boasting a fountain, a European-style café, a musical stage, and a small theatre, was inserted in its midst, subject to an entrance fee and much criticism by the reform-minded public press (Hanssen 2005: 240–243, 251, 255–260).

In concept and design, Hamidiyye was meant to emulate Cairo's famously beautiful gardens of Azbakiyya, the first urban park of the Ottoman eastern Mediterranean, redesigned under Khedive Ismaʿil in 1867 but whose history as a modern park had begun 20 years earlier under the khedive's grandfather, Muhammad ʿAli, as part of

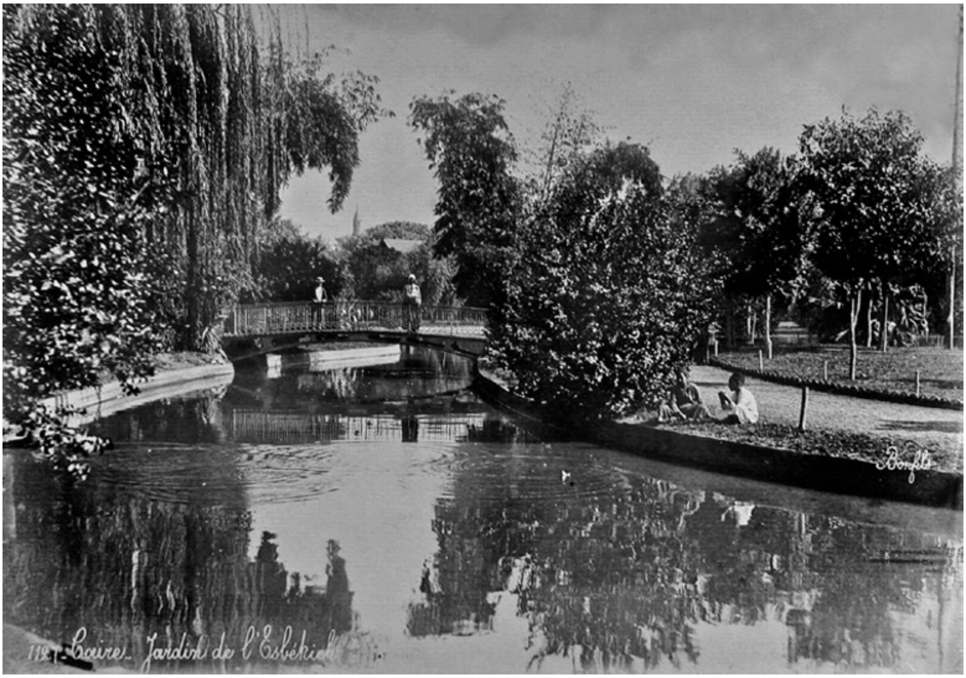

Figure 42.5 "Jardin de l'Esbékieh" (Azbakiyya Garden). Albumen print attributed to Félix Bonfils (1860s–1880s). Source: Gernsheim Collection, Harry Ransom Center, the University of Texas at Austin. Reproduced with permission.

his plans to modernize the city, improve its public hygiene, and possibly turn Cairo into a dynastic capital, having obtained the rights to Egypt's hereditary rule from the Ottoman sultan Abdülmecid in 1841 (Mestyan 2013: 684). The pond was drained, adjacent cemeteries were removed, and in 1845 an English-style garden emerged as a recreational hub for Cairene residents (Behrens-Abouseif 1985: 84), around which coffeehouses, modern cafés, and hotels were gradually constructed. When in the 1860s Khedive Isma'il turned his attention to Azbakiyya, it was to make it the focus of his modernizing plans for Cairo, indeed the hinge between the old city and his new suburb of Isma'iliyya, to the west. The garden was modeled after Parc Monceau in Paris and designed by the same landscape architect, the French horticulturist Jean-Pierre Barillet-Deschamps (Figure 42.5). The result, inaugurated in 1872, was a far more exclusive, "bourgeois" venue than its precedent: accessible only by a fee, the new garden was a plush world of wonders reminiscent of past centuries' European follies. It featured small lakes, waterfalls, cascades, bridges, grottos, belvederes, a Chinese pagoda, and a whole array of services and activities including shops, cafés, a restaurant, an ice-cream parlor, a shooting gallery, a photography booth, boat-rental facilities, and a music kiosk, in which the khedival orchestra performed daily to a growing audience of western-educated Cairenes (Behrens-Abouseif 1985: 92–93; Mestyan 2013: 686–693).

This modern version of the public park, a consumer-driven and sensorially saturated breathing space for the middle class, had been introduced to Istanbul a few years earlier. Taksim Park, which opened its gates in 1869 and may have inspired the Egyptian khedive while touring the capital a year earlier, was intended to satisfy to the demands of the wealthy and largely European residents of the new municipal district of Pera, the Sixth District. Built on the site of a Christian cemetery relocated for the purpose in nearby Şişli, its axial and symmetrical garden, conceived along Beaux-Arts design principles, was surrounded by meandering pathways and a host of cultural and consumer venues, including coffeehouses, beerhouses, and a stage for musical and theatrical performances (Çelik 1986: 69).

As archetypes of later nineteenth-century middle-class leisure and sociability and ideal forums for the confirmed and aspiring bourgeois to see and be seen, these parks could compete only with the new waterfront promenades that became the rage in virtually every port-city, from Izmir to Iskenderun, Salonika, Alexandria, and Beirut. The two also shared similar goals: to satisfy contemporary ideals of urban beautification, physical order, and public hygiene, and the new understanding of public spaces as spaces for the common (middle-class) good. In Salonika, the municipality's demolition of the sea wall in 1889, which opened the city to the Mediterranean Sea, prompted the creation of a public quay that became Salonika's modern façade, replete with all the requirements of modern consumer, financial, touristic, and leisure life (Anastassiadou 1997: 141–150). While in theory, the ideals that informed these developments were shared by diverse reform-minded bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals, in practice the parks themselves produced mostly conflicts among these groups. In Izmir, the transformation of a section of the quay into a public promenade in the 1860s and 1870s exemplified this pattern, frequently pitting against one another the local administration, financiers, European concessionaires, small business owners, reformists, local and foreign journalists, and the emergent cosmopolitan classes. Vested interests kept the question of what exactly constituted public good largely unresolved; and while some appealed for noble principles of public hygiene and urban improvement, others lobbied for urban solutions that would accommodate their personal needs (Zandi-Sayek 2012: 128–130, 170–171).

Arguably, public quays in port-cities, far more so than public parks, were designed primarily to satisfy new demands of a prospering urban economy. They were usually conceived as "gentrification" projects of port areas that had become home for the poor, unemployed, delinquent, and migrant classes. Beirut's celebrated *corniche*, associated today mainly with its later stage of development by the French Mandate administration (1920–1943), at which time it was paved, planted, secured from the sea, and renamed Avenue des Français, had been created half a century before in the context of the Ottoman port's expansion and modernization. It was a publicly funded promenade that stretched along the Mediterranean as far as the small fishing village of Dar ul-Mrayse, and it was lined by the standard panoply of modern institutions, including most notably the

Ottoman Bank (after 1906) and the Orosdi-Bak department store (in 1900), which accommodated novel middle-class patterns of recreation and consumption (Hanssen 2005: 251). In the nascent capitalist economy of eastern Mediterranean cities – as in most cities around the world – these two activities became inseparable. Beirut's first commercial avenues, Suq Tawileh, Suq al-Jamil, Suq Ayyas, and Suq al-Franj were all planned in the early 1890s according to modern urban principles and middle-class notions of consumerism and entertainment, their wide and straight streets dotted with window-displaying shops catering to the leisurely rhythm of pedestrian consumers. In Istanbul, the fashionable avenues of Aksaray Caddesi and Direklerarası were in place already in the 1840s, teeming with shops and cafés, along with improvised stages for *karagöz* and *meddah* performances. These were the city's "belles rues," where on holidays and in the summer evenings men, women, and children strolled up and down and back again, engaging in *piyasa*, derived from the Italian word for market, modern shopping's earliest incarnation (Georgeon 1997b: 71–81). For some, this became the ultimate form of modern recreation. For others, it signaled the beginning of the end of the public sphere (Sennett 1988: 141).

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43

"*Jeux de miroir*": Architecture of Istanbul and Cairo from Empire to Modernism

Nebahat Avcıoğlu and Mercedes Volait

Cities do not triumph in isolation. Their reputation is often wrought with references to other cities. Therefore seeing one city through the lens of another enables us to consider cities not as closed landmarks or microcosms of nations – as is often the case with capital cities – but as major launch pads for physical, cultural, and political transformations, capitalizing on their potential as both instruments of propaganda and role models. The connections between cities are especially acute in the case of colonial encounters, for most "provincial" towns became imprinted with the ways of the metropolis by symbolic and material means. Yet the particularism of each city and the rivalry between them are undeniable and also play an important role in shaping their identities. This is nowhere more evident than in the case of the two major urban centers of the Ottoman Empire: Istanbul, the capital since 1453, and Cairo, the seat of the Mamluk sultanate until the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517.

Although after 1517 Cairo became one of the provincial cities of the Ottoman Empire, it maintained its special status as a commercial hub in the Mediterranean and the protector of Islam, gateway to the holy cities of Arabia. Unlike other important urban centers such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Jerusalem, it was not an antique town inherited by a new Islamic dynasty but founded by the Fatimids in 969 as a Muslim city and had been an imperial capital ever since. As Finkel argues, the conquest of Mamluk domains, which included the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, "imbued the Ottomans with greater legitimacy" (Finkel 2007: 110), and increased the empire's Muslim population, shifting its center toward Arab lands.

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Based on this transformation of the empire it has been argued that “who conquered whom is debatable” (Finkel 2007: 110).

This ambiguity also affected the built environment of Istanbul and Cairo as well as the perception of their relationship. Behrens-Abouseif argues that “Ottoman architecture had … little influence on Cairo’s appearance” (Behrens-Abouseif 1994: 222). Conversely, the impact of Mamluk architecture on the Ottoman capital is also hardly a topic of discussion even though it has been argued that, “[t]he Mamluk sultanate was yet another source [the first being the Timurids] of inspiration for early Ottoman architecture” (Necipoğlu 2005: 78). Mamluk architects and stonemasons brought from Syria and Egypt worked alongside their Ottoman counterparts leading to stylistic cross-fertilization in the Ottoman mainland. Even the Ottoman fascination with the Church of Hagia Sophia (562) following the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 can be compared to Mamluk enchantment with the Taq-i Kisra, the great iwan of the Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon in Iraq. The Byzantine dome and the Sasanian iwan became a leitmotif for Ottoman and Mamluk architecture, respectively. After the fall of the Mamluk territories, the exchange and transfer of forms and ideas appeared less detectable and where they were conspicuously deployed, as in the nineteenth century, the result has been judged as purely political or Orientalism imported from Europe (Çelik 1986: 146; Saner 1998: 29–30).

This chapter argues that in the centuries following the incorporation of Egypt into the Ottoman Empire, both Cairo and Istanbul remained distinctive but related and, at times, even mirrored each other. The mutual fascination, an entangled web of individuals and resources, as well as the shared struggle against the forces of tradition and modernity have bound Istanbul and Cairo to one another. Far from the Ottomans using Cairo as a “colonial” clean slate or a site of experimentation for new ideas and practices in architecture, Istanbul shared with it building types, materials, artisans, and décor, as well as aspirations to religious and political autonomy. In this sense, a cross-cultural approach to the two cities allows us to explore these interactions and also to see how each city promoted its own glory *vis-à-vis* the other.

For both cities, architecture was a primary symbol of sovereignty. In the sixteenth century the sense of decorum became integral to Ottoman society through the codification of architectural forms under the chief architect Sinan that led to a visual network of relations within Istanbul and between the provinces (Necipoğlu 2005). Cairo, filled with “many more monumental Islamic structures” than Istanbul, must have played an important role in this and stimulated the creation of an exclusively Istanbulite tradition (Bates 1991: 129). The book of etiquette by the Ottoman poet-bureaucrat Mustafa ʿĀli (1541–1600), which sheds light on the sociopolitical conditioning of Sinan’s codification, was interestingly written after the author completed his *Description of Cairo*, an account of the “praiseworthy” and “blameworthy” aspects of the city. Decorum enhanced one's social standing while curtailing the other's ambitions. This competitive spirit also led the governors, amirs, and khedives (viceroys of Egypt under Ottoman suzerainty, 1867–1914) of Cairo to see the act of building not only as a privilege that one might enjoy but also as a means of gaining authority.

The Ottoman imperial buildings in Cairo, commissioned by sultans, governors, and a queen mother emphasized Ottoman majesty while employing a range of Cairene architectural forms and decorations (Bates 1991; Behrens-Abouseif 1994). The mixture led scholars to suggest that this reflected the relatively autonomous status of "Arab Provinces," including Egypt, which were only "minimally Ottomanized during the age of Sinan, a telling sign of their incomplete integration into the centralized provincial system of the empire" (Necipoğlu 2005: 470). The endurance of Cairene forms begs the question of whether Cairo and Istanbul might be competing to hold on to their role as the prototype of Islamic style. Indeed, the imperial buildings of Istanbul were erected in an analogous manner. Their architecture, location within the city, and decorations echoed one another, not in strict imitation but in dialogue, linked by individuals following political imperatives. A typical career move for future viziers or grand viziers in Istanbul was a period spent in Cairo as governors, who would remain in contact with the city through their endowments (*waqf*) (Necipoğlu 2005: 385). Cairo also became one of the major centers of the imperial bureau of architects (*hassa mimarları*) headed by Sinan in Istanbul, with the governor overseeing every building project in Mecca and Medina (Necipoğlu 2005: 160–168). The fact that Sinan's codification had minimal effect on the buildings of Cairo was a sign both of Cairo's exceptionalism and the exception that proved the rule.

The connections between the cities were also singled out by the seventeenth-century Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi (d. 1684) as a striking trait of their relationship. Evliya lived his last 10 years in Cairo where he "drew up the final redaction of his magnum opus," the *Seyahatname* (Book of Travels) (Dankoff 2006: 18). The 10-volume "travel epic" opens with Istanbul (Book I) and ends with Cairo (Book X), which is the only "provincial" city to be given a whole volume. This bookend treatment of the two cities attests to their status as the *two capital* cities of the Ottoman world. There is also harmony and affinity between the two descriptions. Evliya lists buildings in Cairo commissioned by Ottoman patrons and describes their architectural characteristics. He identifies pencil-shaped minarets with double balconies sitting on elaborate *muqarnas* corbels as the ideal type and calls their style "*Islambuli*" (Istanbulite) (Bates 1991: 155). He invariably calls Istanbul "*Islambol*" meaning "Abounding in Islam," which is in effect *the* feature of Cairo, as revealed by his reference to it as "Gate of the Holy Cities." The resemblances are used as a trope of "unity" to project a cohesive empire extending from the banks of the Danube to the Indian Ocean (Dankoff 2006).

Sometimes he even conflates the buildings in Cairo with those in the capital. In Book V Evliya produces an elaborate account of a dream in which his patron Melek Ahmed Pasha appears as the governor of Egypt (in reality he is the governor of Özü) who enters a mosque in the citadel of Cairo; this must be the mosque of Süleyman Pasha al-Khadım (1528), which resembles the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul (1550–1557) (Dankoff 1991: 207–210). Like the Süleymaniye Mosque, the pasha's dream mosque also dominates the skyline of Cairo, sitting on the city's highest citadel hilltop visible from a distance (Figure 43.1). Its location and the architectural quality of the mosque with its large dome and freestanding double-galleried minaret (a royal sign denoting its special status) must have seemed to Evliya at odds with the Ottoman codes of decorum (Necipoğlu 2005: 96). Hadım Süleyman, the builder of the actual mosque in the Cairo citadel was the governor-general of Egypt who conquered Yemen in 1536 and became grand vizier in 1541, but his mosque predates these achievements; in effect, Evliya's comparison highlights the pasha's inflated sense of self, and the tension between Istanbul and Cairo created through the powerful symbol of the imperial mosque. This as well as the mosques built in Cairo for Koca Sinan Pasha (1571) and the queen mother Safiye Sultan (Malika Safiyya) (1610) shared more features with the imperial monuments of Istanbul than with other provincial structures.

The Ottomans conceived the Friday mosque as a Sunni orthodox icon, an imperial landmark and a source for urban regeneration as well as a tactical visual device for stitching the fabric of the city between the citadel, where the soldiers and governor lived, and the peripheries that kept expanding. The Koca Sinan Pasha Mosque was erected in 1571 in Bulaq, the new commercial port of Cairo founded by the Ottomans, on the east bank of the Nile. It is crowned by a monumental stone dome with a 15-m diameter approaching sultanic proportions, the largest in Cairo. It was originally covered with lead, and included a minaret (initially double-galleried) (Bates 1991: 156). With its atypical U-shaped floor plan, it distantly recalls the posthumous mosque of Princess Shahsultan and her husband Zal Mahmud Pasha in Istanbul, designed by the chief architect Sinan in 1577 and completed in 1590, which is similarly built close to the waterfront along the Golden Horn in Eyüp (Necipoğlu 2005: 368–376).

Perhaps Koca Sinan Pasha's own madrasa–tomb–fountain (*sabil*) complex built on the Diyanyolu, the ceremonial axis of Istanbul, best reflects his fondness for Cairo, as its layout captures the intrinsic street/façade symbiosis of Cairene monuments. In fact, Bates underlines the different treatment of façades as the major disparity between Istanbul and Cairo, identifying this focus on the façade as the principal quality of Mamluk architecture. She argues that this quality only became apparent to the Ottomans in the eighteenth century, when they began to address streets directly in their buildings both in Istanbul and Cairo (Bates 1991: 142). Sinan Pasha's monuments, however, suggest that early interactions had already set a new standard for architecture and urban development in both cities, between which there was a two-way exchange of design concepts.

The Sultan Ahmed Mosque built in Istanbul between 1609 and 1617 adjacent to the Hippodrome near the Topkapı Palace further promoted this transformation of one architectural tradition under the impact of another. It was designed by the

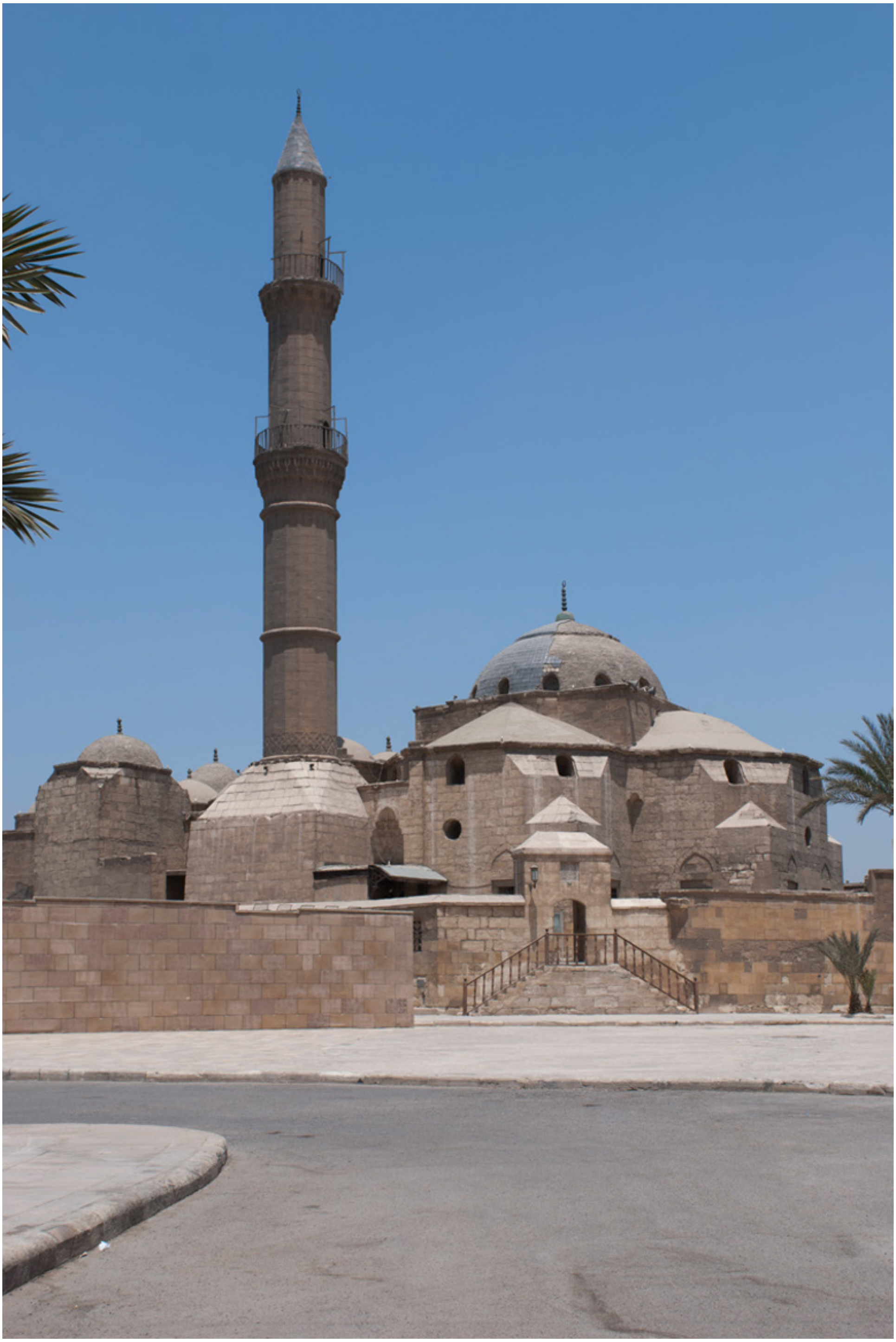

Figure 43.1 Mosque of Süleyman Pasha al-Khadım, 1528, Cairo. Source: Arnaud du Boistesselin. Reproduced with permission.

chief architect Mehmed Ağa according to the aesthetic principles set down by his tutor Sinan, but it broke with that tradition in terms of its size (it is the largest of all the imperial mosques, with six minarets), arrangement of dependencies, and extravagant use of building materials (its interior is sheathed entirely with Iznik tiles). Unlike the earlier mosque-centered complexes, with their rigid layout conceived to keep the evolving city at bay, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque reaches out, as it were, to the city, conscious of the significance of its urban context (a public square surrounded by palaces). It includes an unprecedented imperial pavilion (*kasr-i humayun*) attached to its south corner, which defines the mosque's palatial character and assumes central importance in an otherwise historicist building (Kuran 1990–1991). Bordering a public square, the mosque also opens up to certain urban practices such as "the consumption of coffee … within the sacred space of the sultanic mosque" (Necipoğlu 2005: 516).

Ahmed I's ambitions for the area also had an impact on the architectural topography of Cairo. When he prevented his grandmother Safiye Sultan from completing her audacious mosque complex at the foot of the imperial palace, on the waterfront of Eminönü, "she resorted to having one built in Cairo" in 1610–1611 (Necipoğlu 2005: 512). Freestanding and full of sultanic features, Safiye Sultan's mosque is counted among the most Ottomanizing monuments of Cairo, thus it was as unprecedented as that of Sultan Ahmed in Istanbul.

Had Safiye Sultan been able to complete her project in Istanbul she would have been the first Ottoman "ruler" (for indeed the queen mother yielded great power and was the *de facto* ruler with her son Mehmed III) to shape architecture in both cities concurrently. This was left to the two mid-eighteenth-century sultans Mahmud I (r. 1730–1754) and Mustafa III (r. 1754–1760), patrons of the Nuruosmaniye (1756) and Laleli (1763–1764) mosques, sited in intramuros Istanbul. In Cairo the same sultans built a madrasa and *sabil-maktab* (primary school) complex (1750–1751) and a *sabil–kuttab* (elementary Qurʾan school) complex (1758–1760), respectively. The specific details of these constructions are well established but not the ways in which these building activities were intertwined (Behrens-Abouseif 2011; Theunissen 2006). Large-scale sultanic commissions reappeared in Istanbul after a century and half lapse in mosque construction, but this time with maximum urban intercourse. In 1749 Mahmud I commissioned the Nuruosmaniye Mosque, next to the Bedesten (Covered Bazaar) in Istanbul. His madrasa complex with attached shops, overlooking the Khalij (a canal in Cairo which was later filled in and became Port Saʿid Street), was built in the same year. Though founding such pious and monumental institutions was not at all unusual, the simultaneity of these two projects suggests a newly gained self-assurance on the part of the Ottoman sultan, both in Istanbul and Cairo. Mahmud I came to the throne following a popular revolt that deposed his predecessor Ahmed III in 1730, while the janissary leader ʿAbd al-Rahman Katkhuda (d. 1776), a notable patron of architecture, was reigning as the *de facto* ruler of Egypt in Cairo. Both of these struggles for power were transformed into a building passion (Behrens-Abouseif 1992).

Mahmud I's 14-year reign saw the erection of many buildings deliberately invoking the legacy of the so-called Tulip Age (1718–1730), a new era of cultural, political, and technological modernization with increasing openness to European ideas, forms, and materials (Hamadeh 2008: 93). He also restored many palaces outside the city walls and followed his predecessor's approach to architectural and urban improvements (Goodwin 1997: 374). He expanded the waterworks begun under Ahmed III with a dam and a reservoir to improve water distribution in Istanbul as well as in Cairo, where large-scale semidetached and detached public fountains became a popular form of public patronage by the ruling elite in the course of the eighteenth century, a trend that continued well into the late nineteenth century, albeit with diminishing importance and size (Hamadeh 2008).

The development of fountains as a distinct building type, freestanding and exuberant, transcended their utility. Ahmed III's public (*meydan*) fountain erected in 1729 near Bab-i Humayun, the main gate of the Topkapı Palace, effectively turned the traditional *sabil* into an imperial and urban artifact (Avcıoğlu 2008). Built in cubical form with wide eaves and multiple domes, and decorated with carved reliefs, inscriptions, tiles, marble panels, and *muqarnas*, it displays a synthesis of palatial and fashionable motifs with sultanic authority. Resembling a palatial room or pavilion turned inside-out (Hamadeh 2008: 96) fountains recalled in a sufficiently coherent manner both sacred and secular tropes, yet broke out of their existing conventions. Mahmud I's early reign saw "the construction of five of the most luxuriously decorated fountains" in 1732–1733, all in extramuros Istanbul (Hamadeh 2008: 93) (Figure 43.2).

Unsurprisingly, the most striking feature of Mahmud I's madrasa complex in Cairo, finished in 1750, was its projecting *sabil–maktab* (Behrens-Abouseif 2011: 196). Like his fountain in Tophane (1732) it was built on the waterfront, along the Khalij. But while Mahmud I's in Istanbul was square and detached, the *sabil–maktab* in Cairo with its curved façade reveals knowledge of his mother Saliha Valide Sultan's fountain in Azapkapı outside the walls of Galata on the Golden Horn (Haliç in Turkish), erected in 1732. Its construction was overseen by the chief black eunuch Moralı Beşir Ağa, himself an illustrious patron of public fountains (Hamadeh 2008: 79). Since the late sixteenth century powerful eunuchs of the imperial court became active promoters of a fusion of Istanbuli and Cairene traditions. As the guardians of the endowment of Mecca and Medina, retired or exiled eunuchs resided in Cairo and kept close ties with the court in Istanbul. What developed from their first-hand experiences of Cairo and Istanbul was a mixture of new building complexes, forms, and urban projects. For instance, while the *sabil–maktab* attached to a madrasa was fashionable in Cairo since the late fourteenth century; in Istanbul it was first introduced by the chief black eunuch Mehmed Ağa on the Divan Yolu (1579–1582, no longer extant) built by the architect Davud (Necipoğlu 2005: 508). Davud was also the architect of Koca Sinan Pasha's madrasa–tomb complex with an octagonal *sabil* boldly protruding onto the Divan Yolu, mentioned above. Behrens-Abouseif writes that "the taste

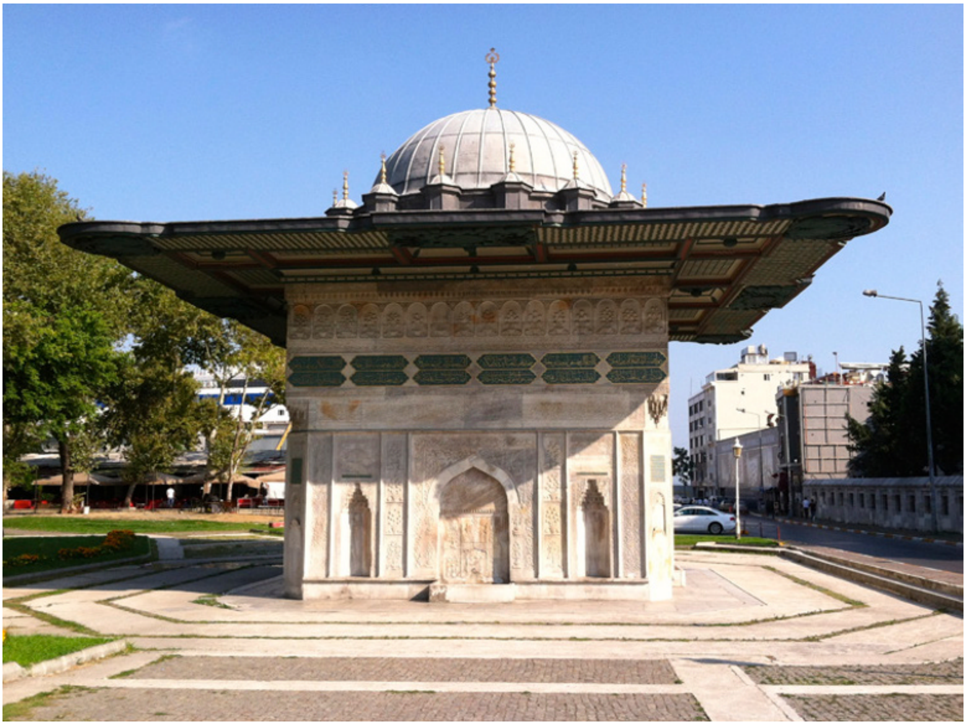

FIGURE 43.2 Public fountain of Mahmud I, Tophane, 1732, Istanbul. Source: N. Avcıoğlu.

for fountains in eighteenth-century Istanbul [may have] been stimulated by the fountain patronage of Ottoman officials in Cairo" and vice versa (Behrens-Abouseif 2011: 202). The repetition of features such as the curved façade, iron grilles, and the imperial monogram (*tuğra*) created between the two cities an architectural dialogue over fountains.

The Ottomans clearly admired the paradigmatic aspect of the fountains but also toyed with the possible combinations of forms and juxtapositions. By the late 1740s the use of circular forms and indeed a mannerist approach to floor plans and decoration were becoming prominent in both Cairo and Istanbul. Mahmud I's Nuruosmaniye Mosque is celebrated for its extraordinary semicircular forecourt, profusion of details, and vibrant exterior, so sharply at odds with the austere façades of earlier imperial mosques that contemporaries were delighted with the outcome and viewed it as representing the new pleasant style (Hamadeh 2008: 224). While its orientation towards the street is reminiscent of Cairene buildings, two other features of the mosque also stand out as unusual: the stone-capped minarets, more characteristic of Mamluk architecture, and the monumental Victory Sura inscription from the Qur'an (LXVIII, 1–6) encircling the interior of the mosque, as in Sultan Hasan's madrasa complex of 1361 in Cairo. Extensive epigraphy also occurred in the portal decoration of Mahmud I's own madrasa and *sabil–maktab* in Cairo. Even the intricate portal itself and the roundels show clear borrowing from the Sultan Hasan complex.

Unfamiliar with the broad repertoire of Islamic architecture, foreign visitors to Istanbul perceived Nuruosmaniye's mannerism in terms of unifying "the elegance of the European, to the Majesty of the Ottoman manner," instead of linking it with Cairo (Avcıoğlu 2011: 263). Yet the Cairene features were not lost on scholars, though unwittingly they saw these as early examples of Ottoman Orientalism and noted the tension between its modernity and anachronism, without recognizing Cairo's relevance to Mahmud I (Peker 2010: 146). Mahmud was indeed among the earliest sultans to actively employ Europeans and non-Muslims in the service of the court, such as the French military officer Comte de Bonneval (known as Humbaracı Ali Pasha) and the Greek architect Simeon Kalfa, who played significant roles in the creation of an increasingly cosmopolitan metropole in the mid-eighteenth century (Goodwin 1997).

Such cosmopolitanism was evident in Cairo too. Mahmud I's *sabil–maktab*, while deploying Ottoman forms, also borrowed from Amir ʿAbd al-Rahman Katkhuda's buildings, in which a sort of hybridization flourished. The blending of various sources of borrowing gave birth to a most distinctive decorative style, labeled after the name of its patron (Behrens-Abouseif 1992). The many buildings that the katkhuda erected from 1744 to 1765, following local building types (notably the *sabil–kuttab*), both revived the Mamluk taste for stone carving, epigraphy, and *chinoiserie* (the floral repertoire introduced to the eastern Islamic world by the Mongols), and popularized Ottoman motifs such as the cypress tree and vases filled with tulips. Iznik tiles, or Iznik-inspired tiles made in Damascus, became increasingly popular in decorating mosques (following the earlier example of the interior of the Aqsunqur Mosque in Cairo, renovated in 1652–1654), and the interiors of *sabil*s as well as large houses, such as the famous Musafirkhana (Guesthouse) Palace built in 1779–1788 (Raymond 2002).

The competition between the Ottoman sultan and ʿAbd al-Rahman Katkhuda, the *de facto* ruler of Egypt, gave rise to building types and visual idioms with tensions between local and global (imperial) tendencies. After Mahmud I's death in 1754, the Nuruosmaniye Mosque in Istanbul was completed by Osman III (r. 1754–1757), hence its name, "Light of Osman." Although Osman himself did not live long enough, having died in 1757, to attach his own name to a structure in Cairo, he may have been responsible for one of the most telling episodes of Ottoman cosmopolitanism: ordering Dutch Delft tiles that his successor Mustafa III (r. 1757–1774) made use of in both Istanbul and Cairo (Theunissen 2006). The latter is credited with building not one but two *sabil–kuttab*s in Cairo (Figure 43.3) and the Laleli Mosque at Aksaray in Istanbul, which was partly modeled on the Nuruosmaniye Mosque and described in 1797 by the English traveler James Dallaway as "small, but most elegant" (Avcıoğlu 2011: 263). The first *sabil–kuttab* (1756–1757) is no longer extant and the second, built in 1759–1760 around the same time as the Laleli, stands out in Cairo by its

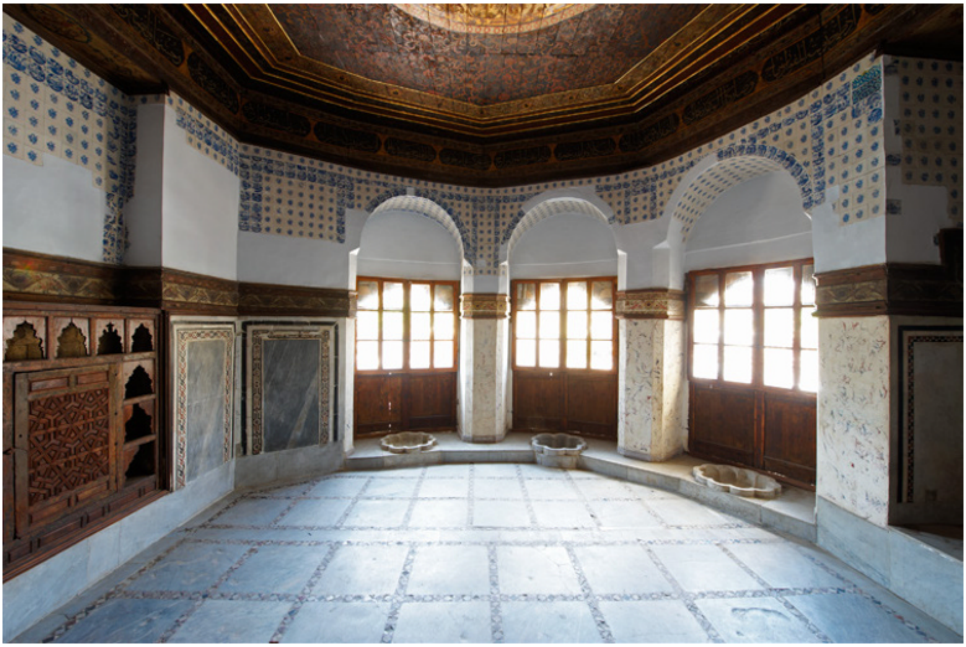

FIGURE 43.3 Fountain of Mustafa III, 1759–1760, Cairo. Source: © NVIC/Matjaz Kacicnik. Reproduced with permission.

unexpected hybridity. Bates argues that it "shares the same form and decorative elements with" the sultan's mosque in Istanbul, while Behrens-Abouseif observes that it is "a fine example of the ʿAbd al-Rahman Katkhuda style, combined with a rounded façade (Bates 1991; Behrens-Abouseif 2011). Theunissen adds a Dutch element to its eclectic repertoire by focusing on the interior decoration paneled with Delft tiles that were requested by Osman III via the Eastern Trade Company in Vienna in 1756 to be used at the Topkapı Palace (Theunissen 2006: 33). Eclecticism, or synthesis of various cultural forms, has always been the characteristic of Ottoman imperial power. By importing European products and then exporting them as imperial luxury to Cairo, Mustafa III was clearly trying to prevail against his rival katkhuda over the appropriation of Iznik tiles. The specificity of Ottoman imperial architecture in Cairo, a prerequisite for imperial visual propaganda, was thus recovered.

The notion of cosmopolitan imperialism with a back-and-forth stylistic and material exchange explains the contemporaneous developments in both cities. Ottoman architectural and decorative modes were more widely adopted after Muhammad ʿAli Pasha, a governor (*wali*) possibly of Albanian origin brought up in Ottoman Macedonia, seized power in Egypt in 1805. During his reign, murals representing landscapes, draped textiles, and floral arrangements in the Ottoman fashion became common in Cairene domestic and public architecture, possibly executed by the "master builders from the Ottoman [Roman] lands) (*muʿallimin min al-rum*)" that Muhammad ʿAli brought from the Balkans. Parallel to this he also commissioned his French architect Pascal Coste to build a "petit Versailles" (Volait 2005: 158–159), which remained unrealized. Muhammad ʿAli's foremost architectural legacy in Cairo was his monumental mosque crowning the Citadel, built between 1828 and 1849, the city's most Ottomanized landmark. The building, which dominates the skyline of Cairo until today, alludes to, and indeed rivals in size, the classical imperial foundations of Istanbul, with its cubic mass, four half-domes, and corner cupolas around a monumental central dome, and two slender minarets (Al-Asad 1992: 45).

Muhammad ʿAli's neo-Ottoman mosque simultaneously incorporates elements of European style. The uncharacteristically high profile of the domes is more reminiscent of Italian prototypes than Ottoman, as are the arched galleries of the fountained forecourt with their neoclassical proportions. The capitals are in the lotus form, so fashionable at the time in France, and the clock tower, a gift sent from King Louis-Philippe in 1845, is one of the earliest to be included in a mosque, which set a new trend in both Cairo and Istanbul (Al-Asad 1992: 54). Yet, the mosque's formal vocabulary as well as its imperial plan type was unmistakably Ottoman, and marked a decisive break from the enduring Mamluk aesthetics that had long dominated Cairene architecture. This was an architectural corollary of the patron's extermination in 1811 of the Mamluk troops that Selim I had preserved as a mark of Cairo's special status following the conquest of Egypt in 1517. Muhammad ʿAli's architectural gesture has been deemed "an act of rebellion" against the nominal Ottoman rulers, an assertion of power and authority over Egypt, his newly conquered territory. The monument is also seen as epitomizing the Islamic world's architectural entry into the modern period (Al-Asad 1992: 52).

However, the siting of Muhammad ʿAli's mosque revived an outmoded concept of royal visibility, a jealously guarded privilege that made the grandiose Ottoman imperial mosques sore above Istanbul's hilltops and the populace in a series of complexes, starting with that of Mehmed II (1463–1470), the last monumental example being the aforementioned mosque of Ahmed I (1609–1617), whose quatrefoil plan was quoted over two centuries later in Muhammad ʿAli's victory mosque in Cairo. As Istanbul was turning into a city of pageantry by the early nineteenth century, the sultans developed new strategies to imprint their authority into the fabric of a rapidly modernizing city. Since the construction of Sultan Ahmed's complex at the Hippodrome, public space was becoming an integral component of the Ottoman mosque. The royal pavilion attached to it was part of this new identity that would eventually exceed the demands of royal privacy, as in the case of the Yeni Valide Mosque in Eminönü, and become the public face of religious buildings.

In the last years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, military reforms defined Ottoman modernism and did much to shift the urban

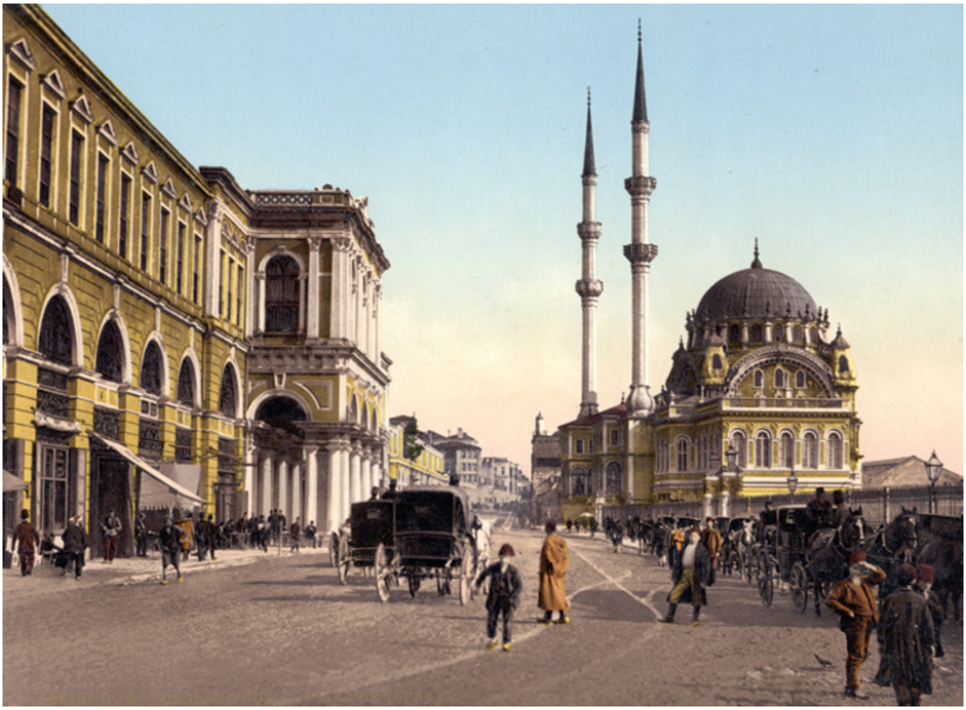

Figure 43.4 View looking towards the Nusretiye Mosque, Tophane, *c.* 1890–1900, Istanbul. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

focus away from the old city of Istanbul. The declaration of the *Nizam-i Cedid* (New Order, 1792) by Selim III, followed by the *Tanzimat* reforms (reorganization of the state) begun in 1836, in the wake of the French Revolution led to the abolishment of the traditional janissary corps (*Vakʿa-i Hayriyye*). This radical measure cleared the way for founding new state-of-the-art military schools, such as the *Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayun* (Imperial Army Engineering School) to train architect-engineers and translate foreign treatises, army and artillery barracks, along the Bosphorus, in Üsküdar and Galata. Outwardly western looking with their large parade grounds, such as those erected in Haydarpaşa (1800) and Tophane (1823), they became the city's new landmarks. The sultans built their small-scale lavish mosques with palatial iconography next to these westernizing monuments of the age, as their religious corollary (Figure 43.4), while Muhammad ʿAli was erecting his grandiose mosque atop the citadel.

The British painter David Wilkie's portraits of the Ottoman sultan Abdülmecid (1840) and the Egyptian new ruler of Egypt Muhammad ʿAli Pasha (1841) could be read as an allegory of the difference between Egyptian and Ottoman imaginings of the modern (Figure 43.5). Although they share the medium of European oil painting, the portrait of the pasha dressed in traditional costume sets the modern in

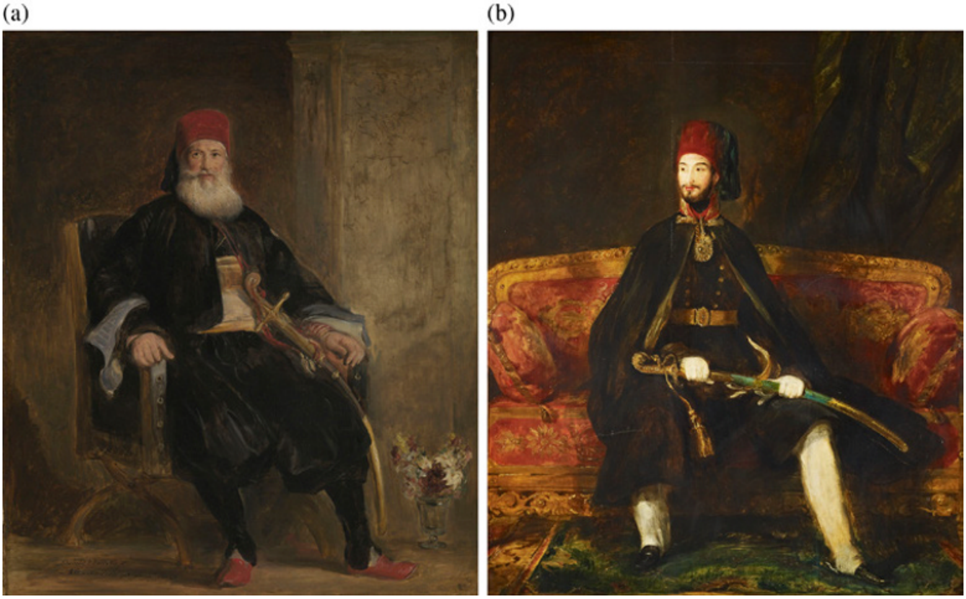

FIGURE 43.5 (a) Sir David Wilkie, *Highness Muhemed Ali, Pacha of Egypt*, 1841. Oil on board, 610 × 508 mm. Source: © Tate, London 2013. Reproduced with permission. (b) Sir David Wilkie, *Sultan Abdülmecid*, 1840. Source: Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014. Reproduced with permission.

a perpetual dialogue with the past, while that of Abdülmecid in western-style uniform jettisons history's authority. Perhaps it is with this difference in mind that 20 years later in 1863 Sultan Abdülaziz visited the viceroy of Cairo (the first visit ever by a sultan since Selim I's brief sojourn in a pavilion built for him on Rawda Island in 1517) and expressed a wish to see progress eye to eye.[1]

For the Ottomans, the key to modernization was urban intervention. The major efforts to change the culture of the capital were simultaneous with the reign of Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839), who shifted the administrative and social activities of the government to Galata, across the Golden Horn, where foreign embassies and the non-Muslim bourgeoisie were thriving. Preventive measures against recurring fires in Galata brought about new building regulations based on European standards and gave great opportunities for European architects to redesign the foreign residences, as well as new hotels, department stores, and theatres. The Tsar of Russia, now a major player in world politics, sent his imperial architect Gaspare Fossati in 1837 to design and oversee the construction of an embassy. Born in Ticino, Switzerland, Fossati subsequently designed and built the Dutch embassy, several churches, and the first modern theatre in Galata, before becoming appointed the sultan's architect. With their distinctly academic style these structures cut across regional differences between European nations and consciously projected an image broadly conceived by the Ottomans as the modern. Their composite façades, monumental staircases, reception halls, as well as the ornamental fixtures all echoed one another. The increasing presence of these lavish buildings reinforced the visibility of this district, and the European methods of urban administration, first introduced here, gave it an almost local autonomy. Economic prosperity brought urban improvements too, with a wide boulevard, tramway, and street lighting, marking a new departure in the way the buildings were viewed.

During this period open urban spaces assumed significance even greater than the buildings themselves, a pattern also evident within Istanbul proper. In 1836 Mahmud II ordered the total destruction of the Old Palace, which stood in the middle of the walled city since the time of Mehmed II, and the partial annexation of the neighboring courtyard of Bayezid II's mosque (1501–1506), to make way for the creation of a public square around the newly created Ministry of War. The same year saw the inauguration of a bridge over the Golden Horn that connected the two sides of the city. In 1839, after the official declaration of the *Tanzimat* by Sultan Abdülmecid, efforts were concentrated on opening a route between the Bayezid (modern Beyazıt) Square and the shores of the Bosphorus where the sultans now lived. The Prussian military engineer Helmuth von Moltke was invited to submit proposals (Çelik 1986: 104). However, it took the government another 10 years to create a legal and technological infrastructure for the systematic improvement of the circulation and several decades to implement it. But a year later, in 1840, the sultan took the idea of a public square a step further by commissioning from Fossati, now the imperial architect, a monument in Beyazıt Square in the form of an obelisk with the base containing the declaration of the *Tanzimat* (Kreiser 1997: 103). This archaicizing monument, extending its symbolic reach to ancient Egypt, was never realized, perhaps because in the same year Muhammad ʿAli became more adamant about his political autonomy.

Since the time of Selim III (1761–1808), the European shores of the Bosphorus had become the preferred place of residence for the royal family. During the course of his reign the sultan spent more time in his sister Hatice Sultan's new palace, designed by the German-French architect Antoine Ignace Melling in Beşiktaş, than at the Topkapı Palace. But it was Mahmud II – to whom the Topkapı seemed dull and gloomy in comparison to European palaces – who abandoned it for a new residence near his barracks and mosque designed in "thoroughly European" fashion (Pardoe 1838: 17). In 1856 the sultans permanently settled at the Dolmabahçe Palace on the Bosphorus, built with a gleaming white marble façade articulated by neoclassical columns, rococo, and neo-Renaissance features, which exemplified a modern mixture of styles from diverse periods. That same year, in Cairo Said Pasha (r. 1854–1863) started building a new palace along the Nile, the Qasr al-Nil, with an overworked façade replete with neoclassical and neo-Gothic details, attached to vast military barracks. Abandoning the Cairo Citadel as the premier site of power, prominent members of the dynasty now settled similarly along the Nile's embankment. Khedives, frequenting

Istanbul with their families, also erected lavish residences along the Bosphorus with which the sultans competed.

Built by Garabet Amira Balyan and his son Nigoğos Balyan (1843–1855) – from an Armenian dynasty of Ottoman royal architects educated in Paris – the Dolmabahçe Palace's eclectic style was in effect a formal and thematic citation of the foreign embassies that the Ottoman dignitaries had begun visiting with regularity (Goodwin 1997: 417–423). The stylistic and decorative similarity between the new embassies and the sultan's palace was not simply about keeping up. It was an innovative form of self-representation, for eclecticism implied the fluidity of the discourse of power. The Dolmabahçe's emulation of embassies mirrored a collective European identity shared by the sultans, whose territories bridged Europe and Asia and in doing so challenged foreign claims to distinction and power. Following the construction of the palace, the remaining medieval fortifications of Galata were razed in 1864 and the exclusively Muslim fringes of this former Genoese colony became part of the newly created Sixth District (*nahiye*) of Istanbul.

This strategy was not unlike Muhammad 'Ali's use of Ottoman and European mixed styles in Cairo. During his reign (1805–1848), the typical two-story wooden shore mansions (*yalı*s) lining the shores of the Bosphorus, with their projecting upper floor and continuous rows of elongated windows, also became a feature of Cairo's waterfronts. These shore residences extended along the right bank of the Nile, the embankments of the two suburban islands of Gazira and Rawda, the Azbakiyya and al-Fil lakes within the old city (Figure 43.6). No such use of the waterfront had been observed in pre-Ottoman Cairo, essentially an inland medieval fortress-city. Cairo's reorientation towards water mirrored urban patterns that had been developing in Istanbul since the sixteenth century, reaching their apogee in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The *konak*-type of residential architecture, with masonry bases, rather than built entirely in wood, also began to replace earlier Mamluk types of Cairene domestic architecture, characterized by heavy and impressively tall masonry constructions (Raymond 2002: 374–375). By the end of the century, the architectural forms introduced by the new ruling dynasty were typically referred to in local Arabic chronicles as "buildings in the new Otttoman (Rumi) manner" (*al-bina' al-rumi al-jadid*): a polysemic term referring to both a specific location (the former territories of the eastern Roman Empire now ruled by the Ottomans) and a particular ethos and style shaped by the fusion of a variety of Ottoman subcultures (Kafadar 2007; Necipoğlu 2005: 222–230).

Under the patronage of Muhammad ʿAli's grandson, Khedive Ismaʿil (r. 1863–1879), architecture in Cairo explored other routes – his main religious commission, the Husayn Mosque (1874), for instance, included Gothic elements. Palatial architecture acquired more distinctive European features, including Orientalist details, without abandoning the spatial arrangements in vogue at *al-Istana* (Turkish *Asitane* or Ottoman Porte) meaning Istanbul, as designated in Arabic sources.

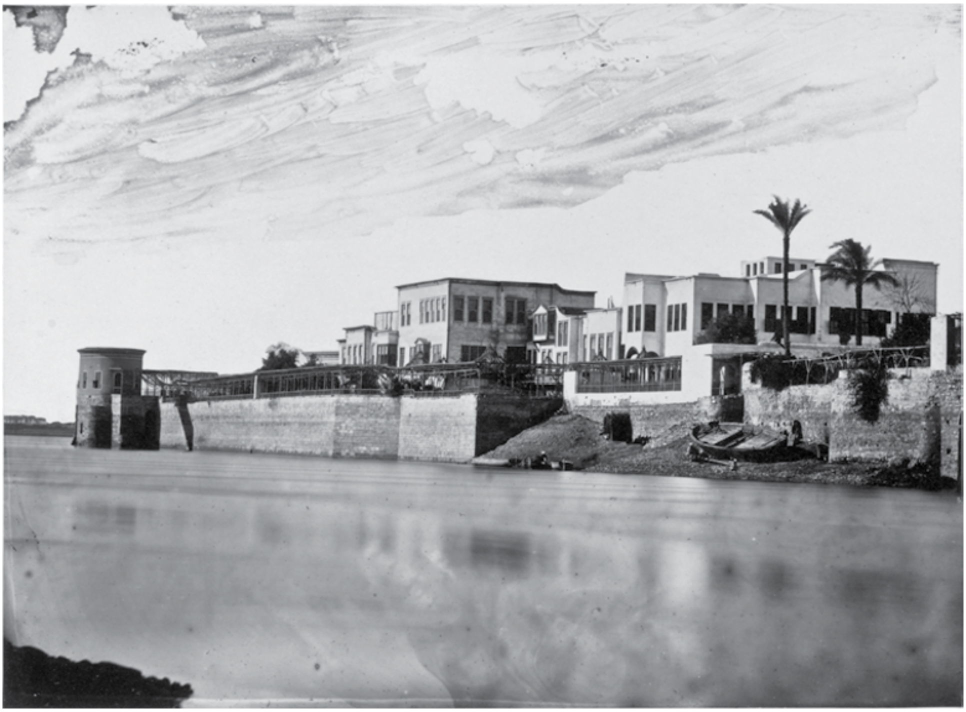

FIGURE 43.6 Albert Goupil, Photograph of Munastirli Palace, Rawda, built *c.* 1850, Cairo, 1868 Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France. Reproduced with permission.

A significant example is the Giza Palace (1869–1879), for which the khedive is said to have recruited one of the most famous *qalfa*s (master builders) of Istanbul, the Armenian Zenop Merametdjian (1831–1912). The palace featured a *selamlık* and a *haremlik* (i.e., male and female quarters) separated by several courtyards, as in the imperial residences along the Bosphorus. New wings, including a *selamlık*, were added in 1875 by the French architect Ambroise Baudry (1838–1906), who was also entrusted with the interior decoration of the *haremlik*. Surviving drawings and photographs show façades and interiors with neoclassical features for the ground floor and Orientalist designs for the upper. This was a formula in line with the exuberant eclecticism of Second Empire Paris that became known for its vertical juxtapositions of differing historical styles (Crosnier and Volait 1998: 66–69).

Alhambresque porticos and galleries made of cast iron produced in Germany and assembled on site were adopted for the refurbishment and extension of the Gazira Palace in 1864–1869 (today the Marriott Hotel), in honor of Empress Eugénie on the occasion of her visit for the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the same year she was hosted in Istanbul by Sultan Abdülaziz. Of Spanish origin, the empress was particularly fond of the architecture of Islamic Iberia. In 1864, she had an Imperial Chapel erected in Biarritz in the Moorish style popularized by Owen

Jones's *Grammar of Ornament* (1856) throughout Europe and also in the Ottoman Empire (featured in the Beylerbeyi Palace built for Abdülaziz in 1861–1865 and visited by the empress). One wonders whether the Moorish style of Eugénie's lodgings in Cairo was the result of a thoughtful choice on part of the khedive, who meant to please his visitor, or rather a deliberate Orientalism on the part of his architects. Whatever the case, Alhambresque arrangements were also made in Istanbul for the empress. An ephemeral kiosk in Beykoz, at the northeast end of the Bosphorus, was probably conceived as a corresponding image of the Ottoman Pavilion at the 1867 Paris *Exposition Universelle* (comprising historicist features ranging from al-Andalus to the Topkapı), where Abdülaziz first encountered the empress as well as Ismaʿil (Çelik 1992: 32; Finkel 2007: 471).

In Istanbul, already with the construction of the exuberant Beylerbeyi Palace complex on the Asian side, villages on both sides of the Bosphorus became favorite locations for imperial palaces and stately *yalı*s with hybrid styles, including neo-Orientalist. Orientalism, with its archaic feel, became a semi-academic discipline attracting architects from all over Europe and the Middle East, yet it was often subject to different formulations in different parts of the city. In old Istanbul, neo-Ottomanism emerged as the new image of the empire under Abdülaziz (Ersoy 2007). At the first international exhibition, the *Sergi-yi Umumi-yi ʿOsmani* (Ottoman General Exposition) in the Hippodrome in 1863, pavilions designed by Marie-Augustin-Antoine Bourgeois and Léon Parvillée harked back to early Ottoman prototypes, such as the Çinili Köşk (Tiled Kiosk, 1472) at the Topkapı Palace (Aoki 2002). In the newly introduced waterfront train stations, monuments of the industrial age, at Haydarpaşa (1872) and Sirkeci (1890) and built by German architects, the North African Moorish and neo-Mamluk styles were combined to emphasize the capital's Islamic identity as the gateway into the Orient. Galata's historicism remained neoclassical until art nouveau transpired as the preferred style of Islamic revival of the rising bourgeoisie (Godoli and Barillari 1996).

At the same time, from the 1860s onwards Paris was becoming a point of reference in both Istanbul and Cairo (Çelik 1992: 35). Following Abdülaziz's and Ismaʿil's visits to Europe in 1867, comparing Istanbul and Cairo with the "City of Light" became a staple of popular local journals. Sultans began to appoint architects trained in Paris and hired French engineers to regularize the streets and transportation network, introduce gas lighting, public parks and open spaces, improve water distribution and sanitation, and above all help run the municipal administration initiated with the Sixth District, Beyoğlu, to make it a truly European *quartier* (Çelik 1986: 32–48). These improvements underlined an affinity with the Parisian work of Eugène Haussmann, who himself visited Istanbul in 1873, although he did not actively participate in its evolution. During Abdülhamid II's reign the old city of Istanbul also received French attention. Invited by the sultan at the turn of the century, Joseph Antoine Bouvard devised a major scheme, from his Paris office, focusing on the strict regularization and beautification of the Hippodrome, Beyazıt Square, and Eminönü, without any regard for the existing fabric. His master plan conceived the historical city as an exhibition space and the buildings surrounded by formal gardens, as exhibition pavilions. In contrast to Galata, the old city became postmodern before it was even modern. Such urban interventions were the legacy of international exhibitions and world fairs, where most dramatic urban and architectural creations took shape and where the past and modernity were juxtaposed. Since the 1860s, Istanbul embraced the idea of international exhibitions and searched for a national language in classical, modern, and historicist models designed, built, and proposed by French, Italian, Levantine, and Ottoman/Turkish architects.

The "haussmannization" of Cairo, the Egyptian *al-Mahrusa* or "The Well-Guarded" (a term also used for Istanbul), under Khedive Isma'il aimed to show that Egypt was "no longer part of Africa, but belonged to Europe."[2] It resulted in the creation of new quarters on the fringes of the city, the development of facilities for public entertainment, broad avenues planted with trees and vast parks, as well as the widening of streets within the old city, all undertaken by experts recommended by Baron Haussmann. Yet, ideas and prototypes were freely adopted; the process was one of selective appropriation, dictated by local conditions and needs. Khedival Cairo was planned around the Opera similar to West Paris under Haussmann, but the building itself was modeled after the Scala of Milan, instead of Palais-Garnier in Paris. Countless European travelers compared the main new thoroughfare of Cairo to the "Rue de Rivoli," but with its intermittent arcade and eclectic façade, the thoroughfare hardly duplicated its alleged model (Volait 2003: 27).

The economic model behind khedival Cairo on the other hand was utterly different from Ottoman Istanbul. It was based on allocations of free land in order to foster demand. The bankruptcy of Egyptian finances by 1877 brought abruptly to an end Isma'il's modernizing scheme, and in sharp contrast with imperial Istanbul, Cairo retained its sizable historical core. The emerging ideas of preservation also played an important part in limiting interventions in the city's medieval nucleus. European fascination with Cairo's architectural heritage, initiated by Napoleon's *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–1829) and fueled by subsequent illustrated surveys, produced throughout the nineteenth century a vast repertoire of its monuments. As one French author put it in 1881, Cairene architecture offered the most elaborate and complete panorama of "Arab genius," and the Sultan Hassan Mosque (1361), together with those modeled after it, had major ramifications for architectural history.[3] From 1871 onwards, attempts were made to protect the city's architectural heritage and a decade later a special advisory board, the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* was created within the administration of pious endowments. Its main aim was to tightly control restoration work carried out in selected monuments in order to avoid excessive reconstruction. It was also in charge of registering buildings worth preserving. By 1883, a list of 800 monuments to be monitored was assembled (El-Habashi 2001). A gradual transformation of historic Cairo's street network took place through a policy of building alignment to rectify and enlarge narrow and irregular alleys following new constructions. Redevelopment of Istanbul happened on a much larger scale, since whole neighborhoods, notably Aksaray, Galata, and Beyazıt, were regularly lost to fires (300 were registered between 1853 and 1922) and afterwards completely rebuilt (Çelik 1986: 52–67). Historic monuments of Istanbul did not receive much attention until the establishment of the Council for the Preservation of Monuments in 1915 under the aegis of the Islamic Endowments Museum, which although it sowed the seeds for protection of buildings, was mainly concerned with the demolition of the city's decaying mosques (Altınyıldız 2007: 286).

In Khedive ʿAbbas Hilmi's (r. 1892–1914) Cairo, the Francophilia of his predecessors blended with some measure of Austrophilia. Besides looking at what was being built in Istanbul or Paris, Cairene elite turned to the Parisian or Italianate architecture revisited by Austro-Hungarian architects. The trend is particularly visible in the palaces, villas, and apartment buildings erected by the ruler himself or by members of his extended family in Cairo's new neighborhoods (e.g., the Tawfiqiyya quarter and the suburb of Abbassia), or indeed along the Bosphorus, as exemplified by the Valide Pasha Palace in Bebek (1902), a vast *yalı*, commissioned by the khedive's mother from the architect Antonio Lasciac that is considered the largest art nouveau structure ever built in Istanbul (Tanman 2011: 190). Most turn-of-the-century Cairene khedival architecture displays the monumental Beaux-Arts style fashionable along Vienna's Ringstrasse, enriched with Secession moldings: the Austrian version of art nouveau. Between 1896 and 1900 the future grand vizier Saʿid Halim Pasha built a palace that mixed historical references with contemporary design. Designed by the same architect of the Bebek *yalı*, its plan and elevation carry many allusions to French classical revival, and in particular to the Petit and Grand Trianon in Versailles, albeit with a more exuberant sculptural program.

In addition to such Viennese references, a major shift in the politics of architecture pursued by both Muhammad ʿAli and Ismaʿil took place at the end of the nineteenth century, when the neo-Mamluk style was promoted by the khedivate and endorsed through a number of public buildings erected during politically tense times. Although still officially a part of the Ottoman Empire throughout the reign of ʿAbbas Hilmi – deposed by the British in 1914 – Egypt increasingly came under British occupation from 1882 onwards. Following this transformation, sources for dynastic legitimacy and prestige were not sought in Istanbuli or Parisian prototypes, nor in British architecture as the new tutelage may have induced, but in the heart of historic Cairo with its Mamluk monuments. Early instances are the mausoleum for ʿAbbas Hilmi's father Tawfiq Pasha (1894) and the khedival Library/Museum (1895–1898). More importantly, the administration of religious endowments, a centralized body under the direct supervision of the ruler and therefore provided with some autonomy from the British occupying authorities, embarked on a series of mimetic neo-Mamluk structures. Under the supervision of the chief engineer (Turkish *bashmuhandis*) of the *waqf*s, Saber Sabri (1854–1915), constructions followed quite rigorously existing Mamluk examples, in particular of the time of Sultan Qaytbay (r. 1468–1496). Examples include the Awlad ʿInan Mosque (1894–1896), renamed Sayyida Aisha after its dismantling and relocation in 1979 at the foot of the Citadel; the Riwaq al-ʿAbbasi (porticoed courtyard) added to the al-Azhar Mosque in 1894–1898; the remodeling of the Sayyida Nafisa Mosque in 1895; and the new premises of the *waqf* administration (1896–1898). This inward-looking phenomenon, which left a lasting imprint on the city's religious architecture and even residential buildings, culminated with the completion of the monumental al-Rifaʿi Mosque (1911) at the foot of the Citadel, facing the Sultan Hassan complex of 1361.

The return to Mamluk style can be understood as an expression of proto-national pride in reaction to the British occupation, as a tribute to a specific *genius loci*, and as a visual response to the eclectic Ottoman architecture in Cairo (Rabbat 1997). The impact of preservation on contemporary architectural practice, at a time when "archaeological historicism" was gaining momentum in Europe in reaction to eclecticism, was also another reason for the rising interest in the Mamluk period (Volait 2006a). The al-Rifaʿi Mosque displays the innovative potential of neo-Mamluk design mixed with archaeological historicism. It was completed by the Hungarian-born conservation expert Max Herz Pasha (1856–1919), in his capacity as chief architect of the *Comité* since 1887 (Ormos 2009). The Riwaq al-ʿAbbasi at al-Azhar Mosque was also explicitly designed to match the façade of an adjacent Mamluk building.[4]

Mamluk revivalism left its mark on domestic architecture too, from the palaces of the local elites – such as the house and antiques gallery of the nationalist ʿOmar Bey Sultan (1907–1911) – down to the dwellings of the *effendiya* (from the Turkish Efendi, the literate middle-class male). The façades of individual or collective housings built from the early twentieth century onward in the suburbs of Chubra, ʿAbbassia, Garden City or Heliopolis amply testify to the popularity of Mamluk revivalism as a powerful visual idiom (Raymond 2002: 399–401) (Figure 43.7). Its counterpart in furniture and interior design came to be known as the "Arabesque" style. A number of Italian decorators and cabinet makers active in Cairo, such as the Parvis family, the Furino and Jacovelli brothers, the Nistri firm, or Gasparo Giuliana, specialized in the craft and received international recognition for it (Ricco 2012). In the early twentieth century, the "Arabic salon" eventually became a standard feature and a must have of any middle-class house or flat in Cairo. It was also a staple of Orientalist residences in Europe.

The quest for a national style briefly also embodied references to a more distant past, that of the Pharaohs, following the sensational discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922. While intense debates over Pharaonicism versus Arabism and/or Islam developed in the political sphere, an eclectic range of buildings, from railway stations and factories to funerary and royal architecture, briefly adopted the Egyptian Revival mode under diverse ideological rationales ranging from extreme

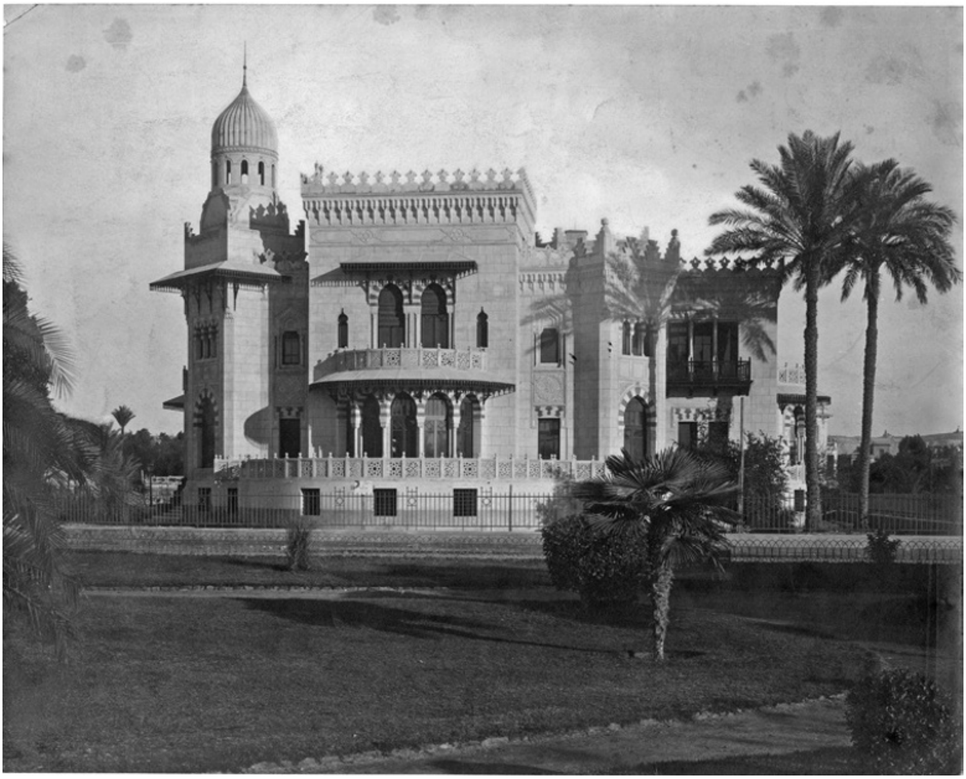

FIGURE 43.7 Anon., General view of villa Harari, Garden-City, 1921, Cairo. Source: Fonds Hennebique. CNAM/SIAF/Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine/Archives d'architecture du XXe siècle. Reproduced with permission.

nationalism to marked liberalism. Pharaonicism gave way to forms of syncretism encapsulating the country's dual heritage within a modernist idiom, as in the work of the architect Mustafa Fahmy (1886–1972), a pioneering professional who is deemed the "father" of modern Egyptian architecture and had become chief architect of public buildings in 1923. The fair pavilions he built at Gazira in the 1930s are good examples of the new architectural language he articulated (Raymond 2002: 427).

Istanbul likewise experienced simultaneously expressions of neo-Ottoman and Islamic revival that could be appropriated by ideologically opposing groups. While the industrial exhibition buildings boasted the imperial grandeur of the court, still clinging to power by imitating models from the Ottoman past, and distancing themselves from eclectic Orientalism, architects of the Young Turk Revolution, such as Mimar Kemalettin (d. 1927) and Vedat Tek (d. 1942), initiated a countercurrent known as "First National Architecture Movement" (Birinci Milli Üslup Akımı) in search of a more culturally and ethnically grounded idiom for secular and religious buildings (Bozdoğan 2007: 202). Though they remained unique, or as Goodwin puts it buildings "without future," the works of these two architects are striking for their imposing façades, hiding a modern, reinforced concrete structure, which mix details from "Turkish" vernacular and Seljuq architecture to other Islamic styles (Goodwin 1997: 426). Paradigmatic examples include Kemalettin's office block called the Vakıf Han (1912–1914) and Vedat Tek's Sirkeci Post Office (1909), both in the old city, near the Sirkeci Train Station. The verticality of the row of multitier windows of the Vakıf Han is reminiscent of the monumental façade of the Mamluk hospital complex of Sultan Qalawun in Cairo (1286) (Figure 43.8). The corner domes with their peaked drums are

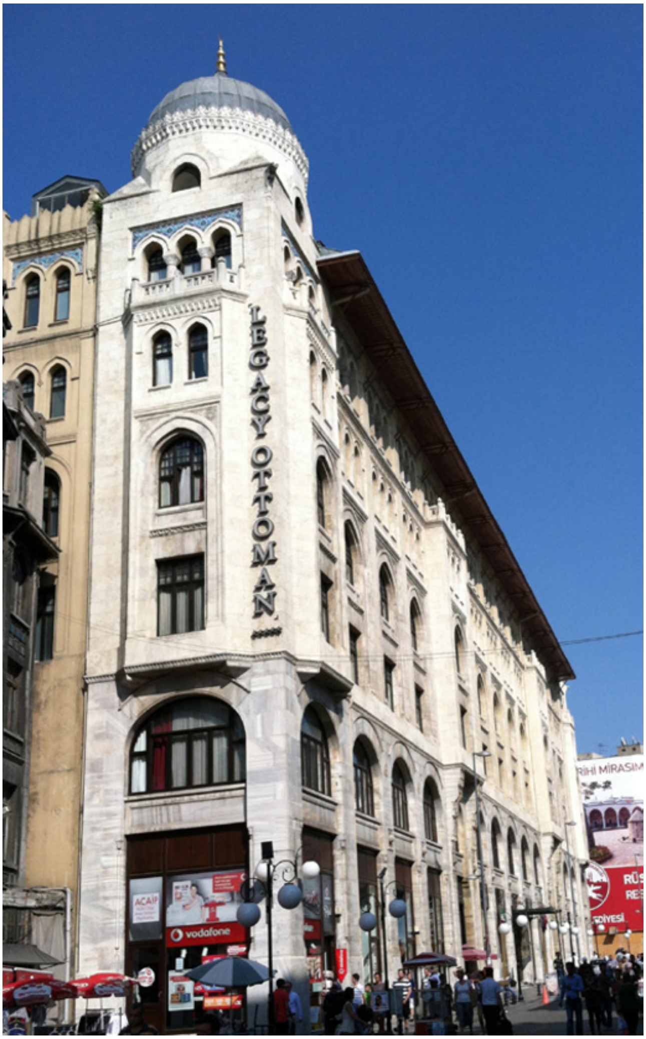

FIGURE 43.8 Vakıf Han built by Mimar Kemalettin, 1912–1914, Istanbul. Source: N. Avcıoğlu.

also evocative of medieval Cairene architecture. This is not surprising since the nationalist/modernist vision of "Turkishness" upheld by Sedat Çetintaş, who worked with Kemalettin, and later by Behçet Ünsal, also included the medieval Mamluk period as the remnant of an older "Turkish" tradition. After all, the early Mamluks of the "Bahri dynasty" had been mostly Kipchak Turkic slaves, succeeded by the Circassian "Burji dynasty."[5]

The architectural modernism that permeated Istanbul and Cairo in the interwar period, following the secularist shift occurring in Republican Turkey in 1923 and the mass independence movement of 1919 in Egypt, was in both instances more in line with the modern classicism of so much of European contemporary architecture than with the radical Modern Movement or the so-called International Style advocated by Le Corbusier and his followers. As one of the most active builders of Cairo's garden suburb of Heliopolis clearly put it in 1932: "our task is to bring to Heliopolis the principles of modern architecture, but not of avant-garde architecture" (Volait 2006b: 33). The latter was seen as unsuitable to the Egyptian taste for being too "cubic and bare." However, at first a different sentiment arose among the architects in Turkey, whose revolutionary impulse welcomed modernism with open arms. Scholar-architects such as Behçet Ünsal took a leading role in the introduction of the New Architecture. Writing in 1933 with his architect collaborator Bedrettin Hamdi, he claimed that, "there is a clear zone in Turkey to practice this new architecture" (Ünsal and Hamdi 1933). Ankara, the capital of the new regime, was the clean slate on which the democratic values of modern living could be translated into flat roofs and simple unadorned façades, infused with the ideals of functionalism and social utopia (see also Akcan, CHAPTER 49). Buildings by Clemens Holzmeister, Ernst Egli, and Seyfi Arkan, mostly in Ankara, were hailed as the "Turkish cubism" and promoted as the contrasting image of the precious but desolate, gloomy but pompous Istanbul, as well as of the tactless eclecticism of the late Ottomans (Bozdoğan 2007: 200).

In the genesis of Turkish modernism, what animated the discourse was not only the rupture with the past but also with Istanbul itself. Consequently, the critics came to its defense with a severe attack on the modernist movement, which brought historical thinking into the contemporary debates about architecture. Ünsal and Sedad Hakkı Eldem, the two most prominent champions of modernism, soon became self-appointed students of Ottoman Istanbul. Their typological classifications in search of the "modular logic" of the "Turkish" house, in the case of Eldem, and the mosque, in the case of Ünsal, were indicative of a growing trend that saw the past and modernity as belonging together (Bozdoğan 2007: 209, 212). However, for Turkish authors the construction of a sense of historical continuity was more about establishing the "Turkishness of Ottoman architecture as its originary and defining character," which was initiated by Celal Esad Arseven, their intellectual predecessor (Bozdoğan 2007: 202). By the 1940s both Ünsal and Eldem joined forces with the Istanbul municipality under the French architect/urban planner Henri Prost, invited by the Turkish government in 1935 to simultaneously modernize and preserve Istanbul (Bilsel and Pinon 2010: 73–101).

In Cairo, modernist views were voiced in the immediate eve of World War II by the magazine *al-ʿImara* (Architecture), the first architectural journal in Arabic launched by architect Sayyid Karim (1911–2005). Educated at the Eidgenössisches Technische Hochschule in Zurich (1933–1938), where he specialized in town planning, Karim (also known as Korayem) had received further training in the firm of the German architect Otto Salvisberg before returning to Egypt. *Al-ʿImara* was created to convey the message of international modernism to the Middle East as a tribute to Salvisberg's encouragements to do so. In one of his first editorials, Karim argued passionately in favor of the development of New Architecture in Egypt, against attempts at defining a national style based on historical precedents. In Turkey, the early decades after the founding of the Republic in 1923 also witnessed the rise of professional periodicals in which the nationalist and modernist ideologies of art and architecture were articulated. Like their Egyptian counterparts, the Turkish professional journals also featured the first wave of modernist architectural activities in other countries, with the city planning projects of Cairo and Milan receiving special mention.

By the 1950s, a major shift in the prevailing European references occurred in Cairo and Istanbul with "Americanization" taking command in the wake of the Marshall plan. An increasing number of Egyptian architects went to the United States for training after World War II, where they acquired a marked American architectural culture, and ties with European architecture loosened. Istanbul was chosen as the site of the first Hilton hotel outside of the Americas, opening in 1955 (Wharton 2001). It occupied a prime site, inside a green zone close to Taksim Square in Beyoğlu, on a hilltop overlooking the Bosphorus. This was an uncongested area conceived by Henri Prost as the "recreation center" of Istanbul surrounded by cultural and sports facilities (Bilsel and Pinon 2010: 68). The Hilton hotel, built by the American firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), with Eldem's contributions, is characterized by its audacious International Style. With its multistory horizontal block, gridded façade, and flat roof, it stood out in the skyline of the city. Although it echoed the Caribe Hilton in Puerto Rico and Le Corbusier's much admired *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille (1949), Eldem's (1952) description of the building in the journal *Arkitekt* drew attention to the modern technological amenities (regarding sanitation, heating, circulation, and material) as well as the vernacular features, designed by him, such as the Sofa, invoking a well-known Turkish house type, serving as the pool restaurant and its arts and crafts tile decorations. Emphatically modern and international, but tempered by the local, it became a model for the Hiltons of the future in the Middle East.

American standards and aesthetics were also channeled to Egypt through corporate architecture. An emblematic example, also deeply embedded in Cold War politics, was the building of the Nile Hilton (1957–1959), designed by the specialized firm Welton Beckett and Associates, in collaboration with Ali Nour El Din Nassar. This was only the second international Hilton hotel, the first being the Hilton in Istanbul (1955). The project, symbolically replacing old British caserns that had been evacuated in 1947, was realized in the heart of Cairo, near Tahrir Square. The Nile Hilton was built for both profit and political impact, and as in most corporate architectures of the time, its International Style was tempered with nationalistic imaginary. Its interior contained neo-Pharaonic furniture and murals. Like its counterpart in Istanbul, the Nile Hilton in Cairo also looked modern on the outside and was filled with vernacular motifs on the inside. In many ways, more than an inevitable American intervention, it captured the city's ongoing competition with Istanbul. Interestingly, while the same corporate project brought Cairo and Istanbul together by its function and International Style, nationalist architects in Egypt continued to search for historical precedents in Cairo for their designs of religious buildings. Likewise in Istanbul, Vasıf Egli's neo-Ottoman mosque in Şişli, near Beyoğlu, built between 1945 and 1949, revived the plan of a pre-Sinan monument, the mosque of Süleyman Pasha Al-Khadım (1528) in Cairo, which clearly demonstrates an entrenched interest in the links between the two cities (Goodwin 1997: 427).

Istanbul and Cairo, both dynamic and assertive of their identities, contained buildings associated with Ottoman imperial power, followed similar paths to modernity, and shared trends in nationalism but also pursued diametrically opposed agendas, all of which affected the built environment as well as their relationship. The cities remained distinctive but related and, at times, even mirrored each other. To draw parallels between these cities is to argue for the historical significance of cultural interactions, and to point out that cities are not autonomous entities but products of the fluidity of ideas, connections, and reciprocities.

Notes

1 Letter from Mr. Thayer to Mr. Seward, Alexandria, April, 18, 1863. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, Part 2 (By United States. Dept. of State), p. 1205.

2 See Discours du khédive au vice-président de la commission supérieure d'enquête, 28 août 1878 (Cairo National Archives, ʿAsr Ismâʿîl series, file 51/3).

3 G. Charmes, 'L'art arabe au Caire', *Le Journal des Débats*, 2 August 1881.

4 Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe, *Procès verbaux de l'exercice 1894*, Le Caire, pp. 47–48.

5 The reference mostly appears in the discussion of fountains. Çetintaş 1955; Ünsal 1981. A. Terzioğlu in his studies of Islamic hospitals refers to Qalawun as a "Turkish Mamluk ruler" Terzioğlu 1992. In their writings, the history of the Islamic world is divided between Muslims and Turks.

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44

Islamic Art in Islamic Lands: Museums and Architectural Revivalism

Wendy M.K. Shaw

Islamic art is an import … everywhere. In non-Islamic lands, where objects have been imported to private collections and museums, it represents the visual production of a region conceived as pre-modern and unified by a dominant religion, despite ethnic and religious diversity, temporal transformation, and global expansion. In the Islamic lands, the conceptualization of material culture as art and its subsequent association with a fixed entity called Islam reveals a complex adoption of nineteenth-century European practices, including disinterested aesthetics, historicism, regionalism, nationalism, secularism, and conservationism. To what extent, then, do practices associated with Islamic art in the Islamic world correlate with colonial power? Does Islamic art in the Islamic world necessarily express Orientalist control over the Orient through the systematization of knowledge?

Codifying National Art and Architecture

In the nineteenth-century Islamic world, growing interest in the musealization of the arts of living ethnic or religious legacies took place in several processes: the essentialization of earlier urban forms contrasting with mid-nineteenth-century modernization; the classification of the visual legacy through publications on architecture and ornament; the establishment of museums and the inclusion of living heritage in antiquities legislation; the establishment of preservation and restoration committees; and the recycling of a historicized visual lexicon, established through publications and museums, in modern architecture.

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Although the 1798 French invasion of Egypt enabled the encyclopedic documentation of everything from flora and fauna to antiquities, the resulting *Description de L'Égypte* (1809–1829) relegated the art of the contemporary era to ethnographic images of costumes, domestic architecture, and material culture. Sharing the documentary impulse of the Enlightenment, traveler-draftsmen working in Istanbul and Cairo addressed this absence. Employed at the Ottoman court in Constantinople/Istanbul between 1784 and 1902, the French-German painter and architect Antoine Ignace Melling depicted modern alongside historical sites in his *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore* (1809–1819). An engineer by training, Xavier Pascal Coste was invited to Egypt to supervise modernization projects under Muhammad ʿAli Pasha (r. 1805–1848), the viceroy of Egypt. His drawings from this stay comprised his *Architecture arabe ou monuments du Kaire, mesurés et dessinés de 1818 à 1826* (1837). Unlike Melling, Coste followed the new European trend of representing cities through medieval identities, ignoring contemporary modernization. He thus initiated a practice of depicting an idealized Cairo through Beaux-Arts style plans and elevations of (largely ruined) Fatimid and Mamluk architecture, dubbed in accordance with the modern European periodization as “medieval” (Rabbat 2005: 34–35).

Valuing him as an engineer, the Albanian-born regional ruler Muhammad ‘Ali, a former commander in the Ottoman army, showed little interest in Coste's medievalized Cairo. Disdaining the Mamluk past, associated with a local history and culture hindering modernization, Muhammad ʿAli emulated Ottoman and European architecture. Unlike the frequent quotation of Mamluk architecture in Ottoman-era Cairene public structures, his most visible urban commission, the eponymous 1848 mosque crowning the Cairo Citadel, used Ottoman forms. While his family tomb returned to the Mamluk-period Southern Cemetery that had been largely ignored by Ottoman administrators during their centuries of rule, it incorporated eclectic Oriental elements adopted from European fashion into anachronistic Ottoman-type domed vaults. More private commissions such as palaces embraced Italian–French styles in both form and design, enabling the use of European-style furniture and the clothing and lifestyles that went with it. This mix of Ottoman–European architectural style continued under his successor ʿAbbas Pasha (r. 1848–1854) (Behrens-Abouseif 2006: 120).

International representations of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, such as at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867 and the Vienna Exposition of 1873, historicized the Orient. Irregular streets typified Islamic urbanism and composite structures reflecting earlier decorative practices represented modern national identities. The Egyptian street of 1867 attempted to condense Egyptian history through a temple (hearkening to antiquity), a small palace (called a *selamlık*, normally indicating the public or male parts of a residence), and a covered market (representing commerce). Emphasizing typology over chronology, the Ottoman display, designed in Istanbul by the Italian architect Barborini and the French architect Leon Parvillée, provided a catalogue of building types: a mosque, a waterfront villa, and a bathhouse. A gateway in the form of a triumphal arch decorated like the towers of the second gate of the Topkapı Palace was added for the visit of Sultan Abdülaziz (Çelik 1992: 61).

In 1855, Parvillée had been serving as a contractor under Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1871–1876) in Istanbul. That year, an earthquake damaged Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. In 1863, Parvillée was appointed to consolidate rather than restore important fourteenth- to sixteenth-century monuments there. He thereby created a unified visual identity for monuments which would inform modern aesthetic understandings of early Ottoman Bursa. He even renovated mosques dysfunctional long before the earthquake (Laurent 1986). The Ottoman government thus began to represent modern patriotic identity not through contemporary culture but through reference to the idealized reconstruction of a mythologized empire.

The imaginary medievalization of Cairo, initiated by Coste and expanded at the 1867 Paris Exposition, developed through Charles Edmond's 1869 catalogue of the exposition and in the Egyptian pavilion of the 1873 Vienna Exposition, a building uniting elements from various Mamluk structures. Similarly, the Ottoman quarter at the Paris Exposition reprised the concept of multiple Ottoman-style pavilions. Although the main pavilion duplicated the fountain of Ahmed III in Istanbul (1728) as an accurate sample of Ottoman architecture, the other pavilions (a high-domed pavilion called the Sultan's Treasury, promoting ideas of Oriental luxury through a jewelry exhibition; a model residential seaside villa; a bathhouse; and a small structure including a bazaar and residential apartments) displayed even more fantasy, eclecticism, and pastiche than the Egyptian pavilion did (Çelik 1992: 56–65).

In the 1870s, publications inspired by influential mid-century compendia augmented the classification of heritage deployed at world expositions. Owen Jones's *The Grammar of Ornament* (London, 1856) and Auguste Racinet's *L'ornament polychrome* (Paris, 1869) decontextualized and formalized patterns from international sources, enabling their incorporation into contemporary English and French design. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, author of *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1854–1868) recognized the replication of his principles of essential form in several analyses of "oriental art": Leon Parvillée's *Architecture et décoration turques* (Paris, 1874); Jules Bourgoin's *Les arts arabes* (Paris, 1873); and the work of the Algerian architect and head of Algeria's national monument service, Edmond Duthoit (Duc 1874: ii). *L'Architecture Ottomane*, sponsored by the Ottoman state on the occasion of the 1873 Vienna Exposition and published in French, German, and Ottoman, amalgamated several practices of architectural encyclopedism adopted from Europe: the search for rational principles adopted from Viollet-le-Duc; the classification of pattern engaged by Owen Jones; and the codification of architectural orders instigated by Claude Perrault (Bozdoğan 2001: 24; Ersoy 2007: 119). Several years later, Émile Prisse d'Avenne's *L'art arabe d'après les monuments du Kaire depuis le VIIe siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe* (Paris, 1877) went even further, also incorporating ethnographic information and drawings of buildings and objects in everyday use.

Executed by the Istanbul-based Italian architect Montani, the plates in *l'Architecture ottomane* dissected architectural form by illustrating wall painting, and tile patterns abstracted from medium and context, rendered as flat diagrams that lent themselves to modern revivalist applications (Launay *et al.* 1873). Their visual inscription of idealized historical tropes into modern contexts transformed history into heritage. *L'Architecture ottomane* distinguished the early and classical eras of growth from later decay, presenting the contemporary era as embodying regeneration (Ersoy 2007: 124). Much of the information about Bursa monuments, comprising the first example of the Ottoman volume, probably drew on Parvillée's work. However, where Parvillée established "Turkish art" within le Duc's paradigm of the triangle in French Gothic architecture, Montani classified architecture in terms of orders. Creating a system parallel to European architecture and its grounding in antiquity, Montani thus presented a rational historical architectural style promoted under Ottoman patronage and identified with patriotic independence. Although spatial rather than visual in its approach, *Tawfik's New Plans* (Cairo, 1887–1889) by the Minister of Public Works ʻAli Pasha Mubarak (1823–1893) drew on the format of al-Maqrizi's fifteenth-century *Topographic and Historical Description of Egypt*, also reflecting a similar use of idealized architectural history in defining the nation (Al Sayyad 2011; Sanders 2008).

Subtle negotiations reflected such complex relationships between tradition and contemporary practice. An anecdote included in *l'Architecture ottomane* relates a popular legend in which a Christian stonemason, seeking to proselytize to the Muslims who would frequent the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul (1550–1557), carved a cross onto a porphyry block designated for placement before the mihrab. Enraged by his deceit, the sultan ordered him beheaded, and other workmen marked the spot through deep carvings in the stone, reminiscent of a throne and a head, where the act took place. "As for the porphyry block," the text explains, "so that it would not be entirely discarded, it was returned with the cross underneath in front of the primary entry to the nave, so that those entering the mosque walk over the cross without realizing it. Thus it came to serve a function essentially opposite to the proselytizing intention of the tortured sculptor" (Launay *et al.* 1873: 32–33). The parallels between the inversion of a Christian symbol within an Islamic space and the text's inversion of European practices for Ottoman ends suggest a self-conscious anti-imperialist stance within the adoption of European descriptive practices, an allegory of incorporation that nonetheless also embodies resistance.

Similarly, the 1860s saw an increasingly complex mobilization of architectural tropes in palace architecture. Whereas the Dolmabahçe Palace (1856) in Istanbul followed traditional Ottoman spatial organization, elevations and decorative elements incorporated eclectic European forms. A decade later, new European fashions of Orientalist decorative vocabulary (probably introduced by publications like those of Jones and Parvillée) were modified when applied in the Paris-trained Armenian architect Sarkis Balyan's designs for the Beylerbeyi (1861–1876) and the Çırağan palaces (1863–1867) along the Bosphorus shores. At the Beylerbeyi Palace, neoclassical stone masonry façades housed interior spaces sheathed in Moresque ornamental patterns dominating the public (*selamlık*) sections as a style no less European than the Rococo and Baroque elements used to decorate the private (*harem*) section. However, the pavilion-style layout and Qurʾanic wall inscriptions indicated self-conscious continuity with Ottoman tradition (Yenişehirlioğlu 2006). Like the legend of the cross at the Süleymaniye Mosque, the interior design of the Beylerbeyi Palace suggests a critical adoption of foreign elements re-asserting an Ottoman–Islamic identity. Nonetheless, a subversive undercurrent in the local adaptation of European fashions could not undermine the positivism inherent in rationalized architecture, charting an important shift not so much from East to West as towards modernity.

Given the shared epistemological assumptions of European and Ottoman agents about this classification, preservation, and exhibition of art and architecture, it would be misguided to attribute imperialist Orientalism to foreign actors and nationalism to local ones. As Donald M. Reid suggests, Egyptian actors willingly participated in the intellectual parameters set through European institutions (Reid 2002: 252). Yet this hardly alters the underlying cultural imperialism in the hegemonic spread of epistemologies established in Europe. As Sibel Bozdoğan points out, the authors of *l'Architecture ottomane*

> were "anti-orientalist" – to the extent that as Ottoman intellectuals and architects they claimed a historical subjectivity – that is, an active role in the making of a modern Ottoman architecture which, they implied, was not outside the progressive historical evolution of architecture. At the same time, as rationalist, self-knowing, post-Enlightenment subjects in the European sense, they adopted the same objectifying constructs of knowledge – the same systematic study, classification, and ordering of knowledge – that European orientalists had applied to non-Western "others." (Bozdoğan 2001: 24)

The re-categorization of works from religious to aesthetic/historical contextualization in museums of Islamic art recapitulated this attitude.

Museums of Islamic Art

Although the establishment of Islamic arts museums in Islamic lands correlates with European hegemony, the inclusion of works associated with religious practice relates less to art historical secularization than to modern administrative centralization. Where direct state administration of religious foundations (*awqaf*) was not enacted, as in Iran, the modern reconfiguration of Islamic material culture as heritage took place beside, rather than instead of, sites of religious practice. Conversely, in French North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and Egypt, bureaucratic centralization in the administration of foundations led to the preservation of religious objects in museums rather than *in situ*. This suggests that, in the Islamic world, the effective secularization in the museum of objects used for worship was driven less by Orientalism than by administrative modernization.

The idea of forming a collection of Islamic art in an Islamic context was suggested immediately after the 1846 French annexation of Algeria, resulting in a display at the city walls at the Parc de Galland in Algiers. In an era when native artistic production was stifled and much of Algiers city was razed under the rubric of urban modernization, objects collected under the new Inspection Générale des Monuments Historiques et des Musées Archéologiques and displayed at the Musée Bibliothèque d'Alger after 1854 and at the Palace of Mustapha Pasha as of 1863 served more to memorialize the conquest than to celebrate local culture (Erzini 2000: 72). In 1897, Islamic items were united with antiquities and an upstairs library in a purpose-built building, inaugurated as the Musée National des Antiquitées Algeriennes et d'Art Musulman. An Antiquities Service was founded in 1901 (Doublet 1890: 15–16; Vernoit 1997: 26).

In Cairo and Istanbul, however, the romanticization of the past and the desire to preserve local visual culture emerged in response to rapid modernization. The call to protect Arab antiquities emerged in response to the destruction of Cairo's urban fabric during modernization undertaken by the khedive Ismaʿil (r. 1863–1879) after viewing the results of Baron Haussmann's modernization of Paris during his visit in 1867 (Al Sayyad 2011: 206). At the suggestion of the Austrian-German architect Auguste Salzmann, employed by the department of charitable endowments, the khedive issued an ineffectual decree mandating the preservation of Arab arts through the assembly of objects at the ruined Mamluk mosque of al-Zahir Baybars (1266–1268), with the intention of founding a Museum of Arab Art. In London in 1874, at the Second International Congress of Orientalists, the British Consul Edward T. Rogers called for the appointment of a committee to preserve, restore, and record Oriental monuments and art (Reid 2002: 223). The assembly of works began in the arcade of the defunct tenth-century Fatimid mosque of al-Hakim in 1880. In 1881, a khedival decree instituted the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe, intending to "reunite in a special location all the artistic objects of real value hidden in old mosques" (Herz 1906: viii). Western administrators who served as Minister of Education during this period, the Hungarian Yacoub Artin (née Jakub Arten, 1842–1919), the British diplomat and collector E.T. Rogers (1831–1884), as well as M. Grand and the French architect and collector of Islamic art Ambroise Baudry (1838–1906) aided the German project director Julius Franz in the classification of the collections, with Artin and Rogers participating in decoding the inscriptions. The absence of Egyptians in the museum – even in epigraphic work – underscores colonial affect: although it functioned on Egyptian territory with the aim of preservation, this interest did not reflect local cultural values. Moreover, while the collections were nominally associated with living "Arab" culture, more recent centuries of Ottoman hegemony were generally excluded in favor of the newly coined "medieval" period including the Fatimid (969–1171) and Mamluk (1250–1517) eras. Subsequent historiography, particularly the periodization established by Prisse d'Avennes and others, determined the Ottoman era as one of decline. This served contemporary political needs by framing the present era, reflective of modernization since mid-century, as one of regeneration (Ersoy 2007: 124).

Likewise, in Istanbul in 1889, a directive from the Council of State established a division for Islamic collections during the reorganization of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, established in 1846 and reinstalled in a new neoclassical building within the grounds of the Topkapı Palace gardens in 1881 (Shaw 2003: 172). The rooms were installed in 1891 (Figure 44.1). In 1895, the assistant director Halil Edhem Bey explained the function of the collection within a longer discussion of the utility of the museum in a literary supplement to the most important Ottoman newspaper of the era. He emphasized the role of the Islamic and Arab world, inherited by the Ottomans through the adoption of the caliphate after the 1517 conquest of Egypt and the Hijaz, as the transmitter of ancient knowledge

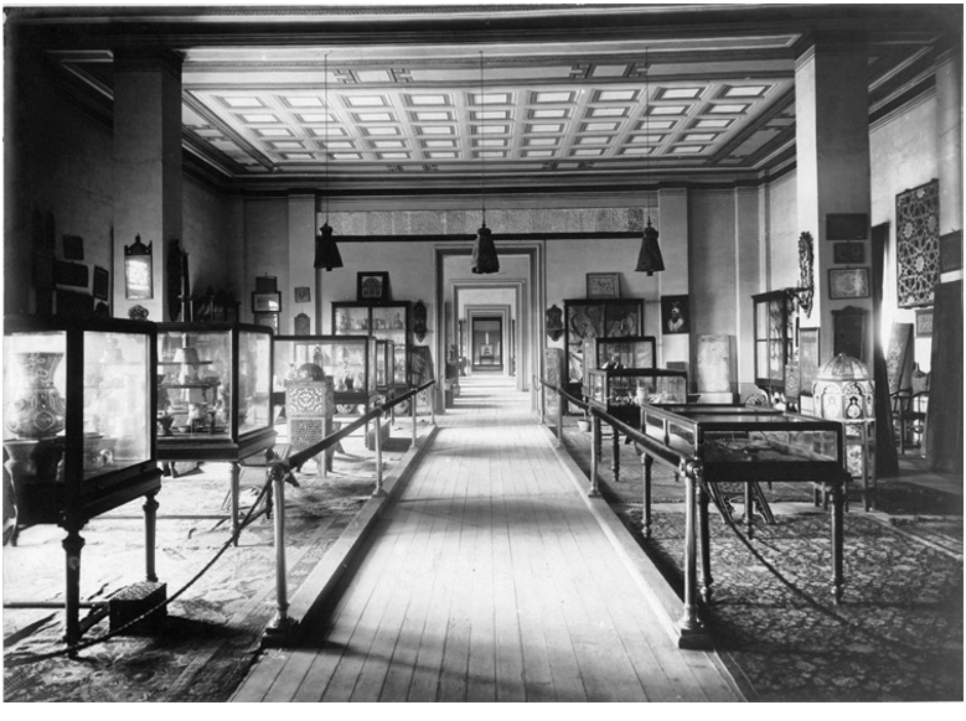

FIGURE 44.1 Installation of Islamic collections at the Ottoman Imperial Museum, Istanbul, 1891. "Müze-i Hümayun." Source: *Servet-i Funun* 984 (April 14, 1910): 348.

to Europe. His essay underscored the contemporary desirability of "old Arab and Ottoman works," producing material culture as a metonymic memento for past scientific achievements and recognizing its contemporary market value. He emphasized the Islamic, rather than regional, ethnic, or chronological, nature of the collection by listing works associated with multiple geographies, including Anatolia, Iraq, and Iran (Edhem 1895; Shaw 2003: 176). Such identification of modernity with Islam reflected Sultan Abdülhamid II's emphasis on his role as pan-Islamic caliph under decreasing Ottoman and increasing Christian dominion over territories with Muslim majority populations (Deringil 1991; Kayalı 1997: 35; Vernoit 1997: 3).

In contrast to the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo, at the Imperial Museum in Istanbul all primary staff were Muslim Ottomans enacting a dramatic transition from one system of cultural capital to another, more in tune with European norms. The minister directing the world exhibitions of the early 1870s was Ibrahim Edhem Pasha, whose unusual upbringing gave him and his children highly cosmopolitan cultural credentials. Born in Greece and orphaned during the Greek war for independence, Ibrahim had been adopted into the household of the admiral of the Ottoman Navy, becoming one of the last of generations of elite slaves to enter Ottoman governmental service (Toledano 1993: 496–497). Also educated in Paris, his son Osman Hamdi Bey not only became an important Ottoman Orientalist artist but also served as founding director of the fine arts academy and director of the museum and its archaeological excavations between 1881 and 1910. His German-educated brother Halil Edhem, mentioned above, served as the museum's assistant director until 1910, and thereafter as its director, while the third brother Galip Bey assisted with the coin collection until 1895 (Eldem 2010).

In the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Algeria, bureaucratization enabled the collection of material from religious institutions for new museums of Islamic art. In the former, religious practice had been centralized during the reign of Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839), through the centralization of pious foundations under a single ministry, the Evkaf-i Hümayun Nezareti (Ministry of Imperial Foundations) in 1826 and its consolidation in 1839, and through the declaration of the Bektashi Sufi order, adhered to by the Janissary Corps (abolished in 1826) as heretical. This led to the confiscation of the property of all Bektashi convents, thenceforth administered through the Ministry of Pious Foundations (Barnes 1986). By the late nineteenth century, ministry finances had become highly dysfunctional. Their utility shifted from the religious to political as Islamic collections culled from pious endowments reasserted the power of the centralized government over foundations and exhibited the government's piety through engagement with the Islamic past.

The inclusion of historical Islamic objects in the antiquities legislation of 1906 accorded them the status of indigenous cultural heritage, elevating them to the same status as ancient antiquities. The 1909 closure of pious foundations after the

Second Constitutional Revolution and the concurrent establishment of the Ottoman History Commission led the government to centralize its collection of valuable possessions of the former endowments at a former madrasa of the Süleymaniye Mosque complex (1550–1557) in Istanbul. The resulting Museum of Pious Foundations (*Evkaf Müzesi*) opened in 1914 with a collection entirely separate from that of the Imperial Museum.

In Egypt, management of pious foundations was centralized in 1835 and reorganized in 1851 to control endowments without a living beneficiary. In 1884, consolidation under the khedive increased managerial autonomy, as the British understood pious foundations as religious structures, inappropriate for non-Muslim administration (Volait 2006: 133). As in the Ottoman Empire, the centralization of pious foundations enabled direct state ownership of valuables: recommendation by the Comité sufficed for removal of selected objects to the museum. Collection from endowments led to a disproportionate emphasis on Qurʾans in museum collections, while painting, generally part of manuscripts and albums, was relegated to libraries far more difficult for the public to access, both in Europe and in Islamic lands. This led to a bias towards the object and away from the image in the study of Islamic art. Similarly, legislation of 1843–1844 in Algeria expropriating endowment properties to the colonial government enabled their musealized rather than *in situ* preservation (Erzini 2000: 73). Conversely, in Iran, the later state takeover of endowments in 1934 delayed the transformation of religious monuments and their collections into secular, nationalized properties (Grigor 2009: 32).

When the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo finally opened in 1883, Julius Franz and Max Herz (1856–1919), a Hungarian architect employed as an architectural assistant at the Department of Pious Foundations, directed the Comité. Directing the museum as of 1892, Herz published its first catalogue in 1895 in French and English (Reid 2002: 235). Alfonso Manescalo, an Italian architect who had joined the Comité in 1897, designed a new building in the neo-Mamluk style to house the Museum of Arab Art on the ground floor, and the khedival library upstairs, accessed from a separate entrance (Figure 44.2). Located at the junction between the modern and medievalized sections of the city, the museum never achieved the popularity of its Pharaonic counterpart, the Egyptian Museum (1902). Like the museum, the adjoining library retained European organization of temporal taxonomies of knowledge in segregated literary and visual forms. The similar conjunction of museum and library in Algiers and in Istanbul, where an upstairs library constituted one of the departments of the Imperial Museum, underscores the close conceptual and institutional relationship between museum and library for the modern classification of the past.

Just as the Cairene museum framed Egypt through dynastic history extending beyond Egypt, its collections were conceived as embodying formal development completely disassociated from local contexts. Herz envisioned a museum establishing a catalogue of authentic samples informing modern industry, an intention

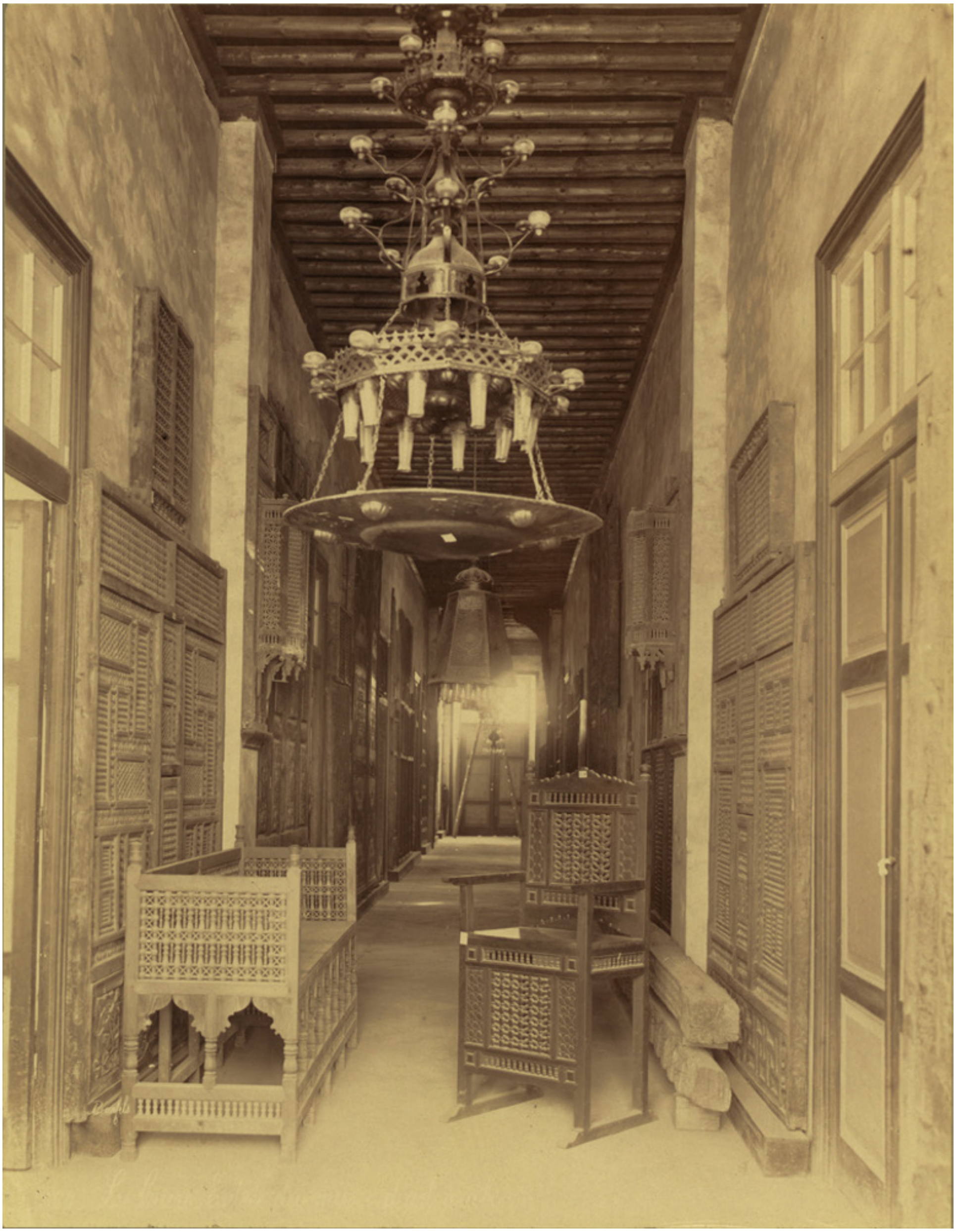

FIGURE 44.2 Maison Bonfils, Interior of the Museum of Arab Art, display of *mashrabiyya* screens, *c*. 1883–1889. Source: Library of Congress Lot 13550.

that had earlier shaped the reception of Islamic art and ornament in nineteenth-century Europe. Despite the collection's expansion, in the 1906 catalogue Herz laments the absence of particular branches of the applied Arab arts desirable for industrial arts, including arms, textiles, and leatherwork. He critiques the variance in quality as complicating the display of proper historical developmental sequences remedied in his own text. His list of exceptions indicates a normative categorization of Islamic arts, presumably rooted as much in existing European collections as in an imaginary ideal. The museum was organized by materials – glass, metal, ceramics, and wood – occupying eight rooms, a passageway, and two annexes (Reid 2002: 237). Chronological organization within each room enabled the visitor to trace historical development, Herz's catalogue underscores the teleological premise that "the grand divisions of the history of art correspond perfectly with the principal periods of political history, so we will force ourselves to examine them one after the other, according to the origin" (Herz 1906: xviii–xix).

The focus on material and stylistic development transformed exhibited objects from elements of an intermedial culture into art historical samples, divesting them from local cultural contexts and producing them as artworks in an imported organizational scheme. Although the museum provided labels, the arrangement of mosque lamps divested of their original purpose and symbolism was hardly different from their use in the *selamlık* at the 1867 Paris Exposition (Reid 2002: 128). Dissected from the ensembles in which they had originally functioned and reassembled for a new aestheticized function, the works lost any original meaning. Secular ceramics and religious texts exemplified aesthetic practices equally, as text lost its legibility under glass. Qurʾan stands (*rahle*s) and boxes could no longer hold Qurʾans, carpets no longer served for prayer, and mihrabs no longer indicated the qibla. *In situ*, many objects would have appeared in serial combinations and associated with socioreligious or secular practices, whether in shrines, mosques, madrasas, tombs, hospitals, caravanserais, or mansions. The museum's segregation of materials and forms precluded their integrated apperception: wood, metal and marble; calligraphy and ornamentation would rarely have been segregated before the advent of this institution. Much as the museum functioned as a site of conservation, like practices of architectural restoration, it erased as much as it preserved.

In contrast to Egypt, where the museum practiced modes of formalist stylistic comparison associated with German schools of art history, the Museum of Arab Art in Algeria followed a far more regionalist pattern suiting the French Empire. In 1929, the museum was reorganized, renamed after its former curator, the archaeologist Stéphane Gsell, and fitted with a new façade in twelfth-century Moroccan style. The use of an exogenous style for a building representing the Arab art of North Africa reframed national identity as regional under the auspices of French imperial might and reflected the museum's internal organization. In contrast to the material-based organization of the Egyptian collections, the exhibits at the Musée Stéphane Gsell created a *mise-en-scène* of works from multiple periods organized according to region and/or ethnicity, devoting rooms to Muslim Archaeology, Moroccan Art, Berber (Amazigh) Art, Oriental and North African Art, Carpets of South Constantine and Algerian textiles and leatherwork, textiles, carpets, leather and jewelry of Algeria and Tunisia, and Tunisian Art. Thus the museum presented the relatively late colonial acquisitions of Tunisia (1881) and Morocco (1912) as ethnically Arab, natural extensions of French Algeria that, as in Cairo, undermined the Ottoman legacy in Algeria, which had been part of the Ottoman Empire since the sixteenth century.

Whereas isolation of works in cases or walls in Cairo and Istanbul emphasized their aesthetic qualities, the fair-style exhibition in Algiers presented the works as cultural ensembles. In contrast to the formalist emphasis in Egypt, the catalogue of the collection contextualizes works through the histories of both origins and conquest. The stress on regionalism contrasted with the religious undertone of museum displays in Istanbul and Cairo deriving from the collections of pious foundations. Indeed, the French catalogue only uses the word *musulmane* twice, in the title and the room reserved for "*Archéologie musulmane*," and only includes two objects, a *minbar* and a minaret finial, affiliated with religious spaces.

In Istanbul, the Ottoman Museum of Pious Foundations, renamed as the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Works (*Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*) and attached to the Ministry of Education in 1927, drew on both contextual and typological exhibition methods. It was initially organized in 1914 by Friedrich Sarre, the future curator of the Berlin Museum of Islamic art, who had recently curated the 1910 *Masterworks of Islamic Art* exhibition in Munich. As in Cairo, the reliance on European curators underscores the disciplinary shift in the exhibitionary re-categorization of material culture. Undated early photographs suggest organization by material, but not segregated into different rooms or by date as in Cairo (Figure 44.3). As in the mode of display promoted in Berlin by Wilhelm von Bode (d. 1929), the founder of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, carpets hung on the walls of all the rooms, serving as visual backdrops for objects too large for glass cases. Thus, although preferring scientific to aestheticizing display techniques, the exhibits here underscored the conjunction of multiple materials in a shared space, allowing a visual comparison between media as in Berlin but not in Cairo. Unlike the Egyptian catalogues, emphasizing formal description over provenance, in the Ottoman museum, provenance served as a constant reminder of the modern, territorial relationships fundamental to the establishment of the collection. Where the Algerian museum catalogue reminded the visitor of the French conquest, its Ottoman counterpart underscored the acquisition process from pious endowments that secured the "awe-inspiring" museum location at the Süleymaniye Mosque complex and the objects within it. Arranged more by material than by date, the works suggest a typologized reorganization of the interiors of socioreligious endowments from which they were culled, transforming them, as in Cairo, into artworks. Closed in 1939 because of concerns over World War II, the museum reopened in 1949 in a less central former madrasa near the Valens Aqueduct, where it remained until its move in 1983 to its current location at the Palace of Ibrahim Pasha (d. 1536) on the Hippodrome.

The Islamic collections of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum (the republican name given to the former Imperial Museum) remained separate, moving to the Tiled Pavilion (Çinili Köşk, built 1472) within the Topkapı Palace gardens, in 1908 (Figure 44.4). Writing in 1938, the museum director Aziz Ogan casts this

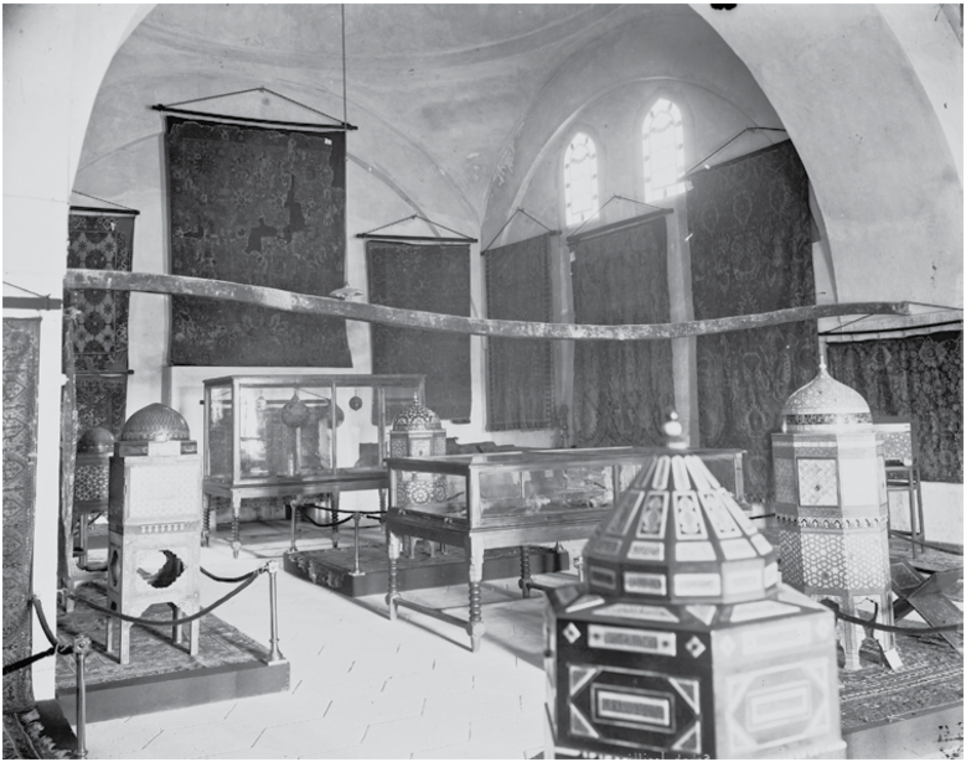

Figure 44.3 Installation of Islamic collections at the Süleymaniye Mosque complex, *c*. 1914. Source: Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut.

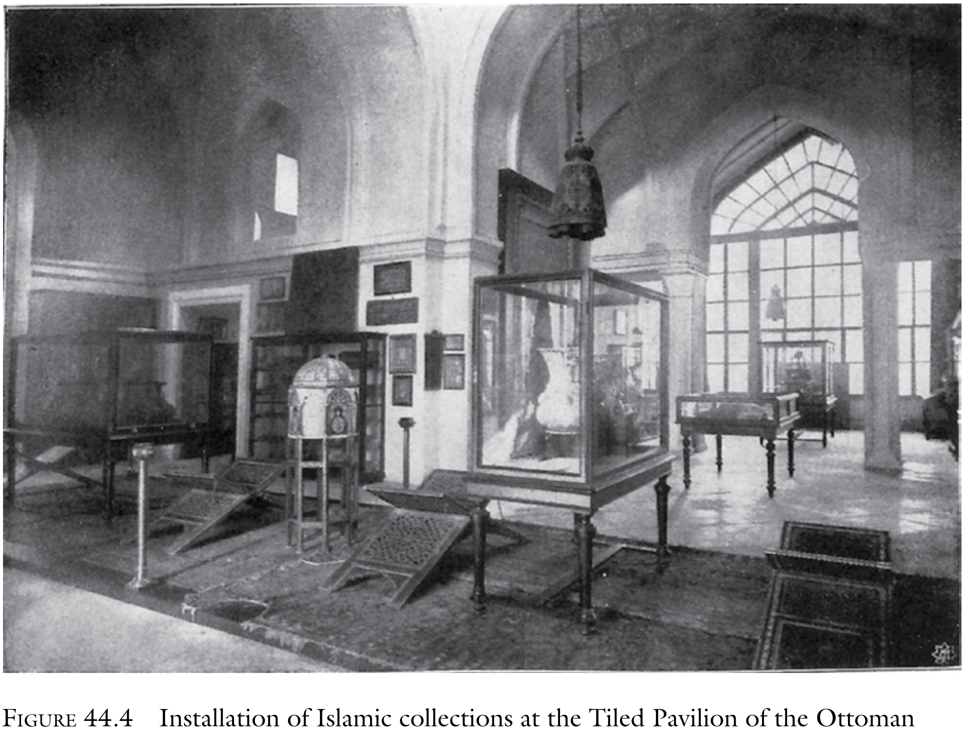

Figure 44.4 Installation of Islamic collections at the Tiled Pavilion of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, 1909.

collection less as Islamic than as integral to a nationalized Turkish aesthetic rooted in the Ottoman legacy:

> The division of the works from the various media and regions of Islamic art is uneven. The objective in the organization of this collection is not to choose examples showing development across the history of art, but rather to present the artistic value of the works on hand without consideration of techniques or eras. After all, from the beginning the dominant idea above all has been to clarify the evolution of Turkish national art. (Ogan and Kühnel 1938: 30)

Unlike the Istanbul Museum of Pious Foundations, the Cairo Museum of Arab Art, administered by French directors, expanded through archaeological excavations (Wiet 1939: 1) (Figure 44.5). In line with the production of Islamic art as a

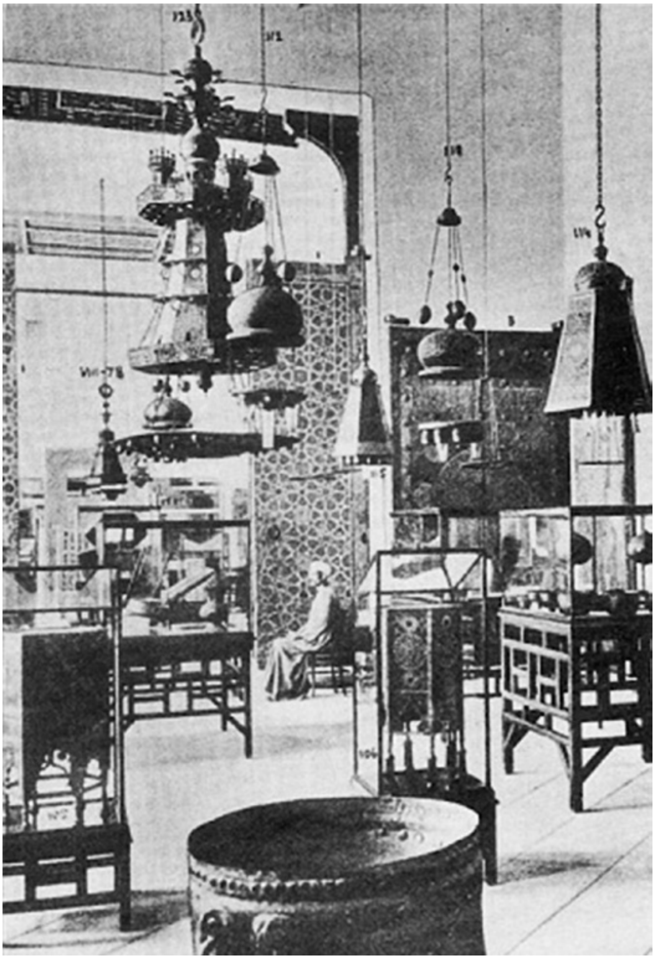

FIGURE 44.5 Museum of Arab Art, Cairo. Ninth Hall (Metal Work). Source: Herz (1906).

historical discipline in Europe, a diachronic model of Islamic aesthetics divorced from the local, synchronic experiences of Muslims was constructed. The historiography of Islamic art in Wiet's guide to the museum strengthens this dissociative effect. Providing an outline of Egyptian history from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries, he briefly concludes that with the Ottoman conquest of 1517, "Egypt lost its independence and its personality: it would not recover them during the nineteenth century through the efforts of Muhammad ʿAli and his successors" (Wiet 1939: 13).

This attitude to the recent past is apparent in other museums in the region, and continued beyond the colonial period. The Islamic collections at the state-funded Jordan Archaeological Museum in Amman (founded 1951) and the privately funded Sursock Museum in Beirut (founded 1961) similarly exhibit works through a dynastic paradigm minimizing the legacy of four centuries of Ottoman rule in the region, contrasting an ideology of Arab identity with that of foreign Turkish rule. While art could authenticate medieval Islamic visual culture, only nostalgia for an inevitably lost past could legitimate the modern.

Architectural Revivalism

This process of stratification took place not only at the museum in Cairo but also in the recycling of the aestheticized past in the city's modern architecture. Beginning in the 1890s, the documentation of Mamluk architecture undertaken in the publications of the 1870s was transformed into a new visual vocabulary for the built environment, a revivalist style known as neo-Mamluk (Rabbat 1997; see also Avcıoğlu and Volait, CHAPTER 43). The frame for this architectural historicization was the modernization undertaken by the Haussmann-inspired Minister of Public Works 'Ali Pasha Mubarak under Khedive Ismaʿil. That project was executed with great alacrity to impress foreign visitors at the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (Reid 2002: 216). The style later considered under the rubric of neo-Mamluk can be broadly associated with three related practices: the incorporation of historical elements from multiple structures as part of new construction and restoration; the articulation of an abstracted historical vocabulary on modern official buildings; and the eclectic use of this vocabulary within broader fashions of exoticism contributing to an "Egyptian" flavor.

The earliest such structure was the al-Rifaʿi Mosque, commissioned in 1869 by Princess Khoshiar, mother of Khedive Ismaʿil, from the architect Hussein Kojak Fahmi, who based his plan on Coste's unrealized designs for the mosque of Muhammad ʿAli. When Max Herz became project architect in 1880, he appreciated the use of Mamluk stylistic elements, but he disliked its symmetry and topographic insensitivity as revealing affinities with the Beaux-Arts tradition. Subsequent disagreements in the royal family prevented construction until 1906.

Unlike earlier architects, Herz favored preservation methods responding to the existing condition of each monument and restoring only reliably documented elements. He believed that unique monuments ought to be preserved rather than restored. Nonetheless, the recognition of "unique" monuments led to a lot of creative and eclectic restoration. Thus, Herz saw a unique structure like the mosque of Ibn Tulun (879) or the prized tenth- though twelfth-century Fatimid mosques as requiring preservation (Ormos 2002: 125–126). However, for structures deemed less unique, architectural elements copied from diverse fifteenth-century structures were anachronistically and eclectically incorporated into restorations (Rabbat 2010; Volait 2006). Following the periodization of Prisse d'Avennes, Herz viewed the Ottoman period as one of decline, and thus destroyed many Ottoman-era additions in favor of Mamluk forms produced by craftsmen trained through designs recorded in European documentation (Ormos 2002: 130).

Choices between preservation and restoration also affected the utility of sites: whereas preservation resulted in permanent, picturesque ruins without utility, restoration potentially enabled the socioreligious use of sites. Only 20 of approximately 300 monuments addressed by the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe underwent complete restoration, rather than preservation. Those chosen for restoration were deemed particularly important for the city's urban fabric, and included eight Islamic religious monuments, one Islamic-style mansion, and two Coptic monuments (Ormos 2002: 129). As many of these sites (such as the Mosque of Sultan Qaytbay) had been ruined too severely to be operational before restoration, this process in effect altered not only the secular historical map of the city with an emphasis on the Mamluk era but also the geography of religious worship. Housed in buildings emphasizing historical identity, worship became associated with visual cues framed by national meaning as much as religious purpose. When it involved the removal of merchant booths from the exterior walls or fountains from the courtyards of mosques, restoration conformed to Herz's categorization of social practice, where trade and worship ought to be separated. Thus, the multiplicity of functions that had once existed around mosques were reduced to a single, isolated function: that of prayer.

The application of Mamluk elements to buildings with modern functions, such as the Egyptian National Library (1894) and the Ministry of Endowments (1898, 1911, and 1929), further abstracted style from form. In contrast to Muhammad ʿAli's earlier interest in distancing himself from local heritage and his concomitant ambition to project his designs on Ottoman power through the adoption of Ottoman architectural forms, these projects, largely undertaken under the auspices of the Ministry of Pious Foundations, reflected the proto-nationalist interests of the later khedives. Neo-Mamluk stylistic elements in buildings like the Cairo Train Station (remodeled 1891–1893) and Shepheard's Hotel (1915) gave the exoticism popular in Europe a local flavor, reflecting a supposed national character, and continuing to inform Cairene architecture into the twentieth century (Rabbat 2010; Reid 2002; Volait 2006: 241).

The desire for urbanization under ʿAli Mubarak often conflicted with the Comité's drive for preservation (Sanders 2008: 65–66). Reid points out that in

Egypt, “most Egyptians valued mosques as living centers of worship and study and resented preservationist pressure to aestheticize, historicize, and monumentalize them for the enjoyment of Western tourists and scholars.” Thus, although ʿAli Mubarak carefully described monuments in his work, and in a celebrated historical text, he neither included visual depictions nor pressed for their preservation (Reid 2002: 232–233). While grounded in nineteenth-century epistemologies of temporality and the relationship between past, present, and future established through the writing of history, the interest in regional, proto-national history evinced in histories such as that of ʿAli Mubarak cannot be conflated with the impulse towards the physical preservation of objects and monuments, whether in museums, through preservation, or through recycling in modern forms and structures.

Like neo-Mamluk revivalism in Egypt, Ottoman and Turkish nationalization of architectural style built on the documentation and classification of Ottoman architecture established in *l’Architecture ottomane* prepared for the 1873 Vienna Exposition. Major public commissions by foreign architects teaching in Istanbul, such as August Jasmund’s Sirkeci Railroad Station (1880–1890) and Alexandre Vallaury’s Public Debt Administration Building (1897), reflected an Orientalizing style mixing Oriental and Islamic references. The young Ottoman architects Vedat (Tek) (d. 1942) and Kemalettin (d. 1927) objected to such eclecticism, becoming architectural leaders in the patriotic renaissance following the Constitutional Revolution of 1909 (see Avcıoğlu and Volait, CHAPTER 43). Although often retroactively referred to as the first national style (Bozdoğan 2001: 22–32), like the multinational authors of *l’Architecture ottomane*, architects participating in this movement included non-Turkish Ottoman citizens and foreigners seeking to revive the strong Ottoman tradition within modern forms. The closed courtyard of the Central Post Office in Istanbul (1909) designed by Vedat, quoted Ottoman arcades and revetments while addressing the modern spatial needs of crowds and the technical needs of an efficient postal service. Similarly, the ferry stations of the Şirket-i Hayriye, the imperial ferry company in Istanbul, adopted forms associated with kiosks to create fanciful, well-ventilated designs serving modern functions while appealing to touristic exoticism (Bozdoğan 2001: 22–32). In 1913, nearly identical new mosques by Kemalettin in the new suburbs of Bebek and Bostancı suggested a bureaucratic centralization of public works idealizing three-bay early Ottoman mosques. Eschewing the Westernizing decoration of mid-nineteenth-century mosque architecture, the neo-Baroque gave way to the more tempered neoclassicism quoted at the 1871 Pertevniyal Valide Mosque Complex (praised in *l’Architecture ottomane*) and inverted the imperial grandeur of earlier mosques. Similarly, Vedat’s Tayyare (airplane) apartments in Laleli, Istanbul (1922), reduced the decorative forms of urban residential architecture while altering scale, this time to the multistory format of a modern urban multiple occupancy structure with a central courtyard (Goodwin 1971: 426).

A second wave of national architecture in the early years of the Republic of Turkey built on the earlier generation's use of public architecture by turning to residential forms which were perceived as more Turkish, less affiliated with religion and the Ottoman legacy, and therefore well suited to a country grounding its modern ideals in secularism and republicanism (Bozdoğan 2001: 37). The transformation from a religious to a secular orientation was perhaps nowhere more in evidence than in Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu's design for the Ethnography Museum in Ankara (1925–1927). Adopting the form of the three-bay mosque type for the entry and central hall of the museum, Koyunoğlu underscored the museum's function of recontextualizing objects culled, at least in part, from defunct dervish lodges and associated religious structures for a secular exhibition space, encoded through the modern rubric of ethnography, a museum practice proliferating in contemporary Europe and the Soviet Union. Although not a museum of Islamic art in name, the similarity of the works within to those at the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art underscored the practices of modern, secular categorization and visualization embodied in both institutions.

Conclusions

In his preface to the 1906 catalogue of the National Museum of Arab Art in Cairo, Max Herz indicates the contrast between the functions of a museum and the interests of the populace: "It is curious to note that this new tendency [to give Islamic art the attention it merits] coincides with the invasion of Egypt of Occidental products and ideas, but nonetheless has not the least rapport with the material and moral conditions of the country" (Herz 1906: vii–viii). Using the word "Renaissance," he links contemporary interest in architectural restoration, to the broader revival in literature and culture, called the *Nahda*, which responded to the rapid Westernization since the reign of Muhammad ʻAli. Yet preservation was often inseparable from destruction. Just as conservation often involved the destruction of supposedly extraneous buildings surrounding historical buildings, emphasizing single masterworks over urban ensembles, decontextualized museum artifacts likewise emphasized aestheticized and historicized individual works over their collective contextual utility. In both Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, the collection of objects associated with religious practice was intimately tied to the destructive impulse of modernism, as embodied in the control and/or closure of religious foundations for the construction of a new administrative and economic order.

Whereas in regions under more direct European hegemony, museums were deployed far earlier as institutions of visual heritage production, in Iran a similar purpose had been served through the appropriation of the tomb, a traditional site of religious visitation, as a secular and a national symbol. Under Riza Shah (r. 1925–1941), this largely took the form of Sasanian revivalism in search of ancient national pedigree, paralleling Pharaonic and Sumerian-Hittite revivalism in Egypt and Turkey, respectively. In the 1960s, Islamic and folk identities emerged as alternatives to Riza Shah's Western paradigms of modernity (Grigor 2009: 146). Like the museum, the mausoleum involved a ritualized practice that linked travel and visuality. In the Republic of Turkey, too, tombs that once served as popular sites of religious visitation, such as those of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi (d. 1273) in Konya and Hacı Bektaş (d. *c.* 1271) near Kırşehir, have been incorporated into dominant secularist ideologies through their articulation as museums (Shaw 2002, 2011). In contrast to the Ethnographic Museum in Ankara, these museums overlap practices of worship, such as circumambulation and prayer, with technologies of exhibition, such as labeled glass cases. Even Anıtkabir, the tomb of the nation's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (President 1923–1938), enshrines secularism as a site of ritualized visitation that incorporates a museum. Since the 1980s, religious practice within the previously secular Topkapı Palace Museum and the Ayasofya Museum has led to several controversies concerning the religious use of secular museum spaces (Hartmann 2013; Shaw 2002, 2010).

Such convergences reflect the ways in which epistemologies of modernity inform museums and religion alike. Nineteenth-century religious revivalism underlying contemporary Islam was enabled by historical recovery parallel with that engaged through museums and architectural revivalism. Exiled to Paris after resisting the French conquest of Algeria between 1830 and 1842, Amir ʿAbd al Qadir al-Jazairi (d. 1883) settled in Damascus where he became the leader of a Sufi circle, redefining the relationship between the mysticism of Ibn ʿArabi (d. 1240) and modern reason. After an education at a modern Ottoman school, his disciple Tahir al-Jazairi (d. 1920) became superintendent of schools under the empire's premier reformer Midhat Pasha (d. 1883), subsequently creating a modern library system to better preserve ancient manuscripts formerly scattered in endowed foundations. He thus discovered manuscripts of the conservative thinker Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), whose thought became central to the Islamist reform movement reacting against the Ottoman bureaucratization of religious leadership.

In the early twentieth century, this Salafiyya thought of Damascus merged with Islamic modernism, consolidated by the reformist jurists Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897) and Muhammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905), who published a rationalist Islamist journal in Paris starting in 1884. After teaching at modernist schools upon his return to Baghdad in 1884, ʿAbduh became the Mufti of Egypt from 1899 until his death in 1905. Like their secular counterparts involved in museums and architecture, these religious leaders favored selective engagement with contemporary practice, including the rationalism of modern science and technology in order to reform and revive Islam (Özervarlı 2007; Weismann 2001: 207). As the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia augmented its political power as the first independent Islamic nation in the era of colonialism through the economic might enabled by the discovery of vast oil reserves in the 1920s, this modernization merged with Saudi support of the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam of Muhammad ibn

ʿAbd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), which had emerged in reaction to more ecumenical interpretations of Islam, including those that had flourished under Ottoman rule.

Like the rationalization of history in modern revivalist Islam, the creation of museums in Islamic lands segregated living material culture from objects re-categorized as art. These rarefied objects became associated with notions of "tradition" and "heritage" opposed and resistant to modernization, increasingly expressed in newly adopted forms of art making in the Western modality, such as painting and sculpture. Hence, more than Orientalism, the taxonomic, rationalizing historicism of modernism has constructed contemporary understandings of Islam, whether as culture, as in museums, or as religion. The current study and exhibition of Islamic art is now on the rise in academic institutions, at refurbished collections of Islamic art in London, New York, Paris, Copenhagen, and Berlin, and at museums owned by Muslims, including the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, the Aga Khan Museum of Islamic Art in Toronto, Canada, and the renovated Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (Junod *et al.* 2012). Such collections straddle the complex boundary between attractive exoticism and informative peace-making against a backdrop of increasing tension between secularism and revivalism in predominantly Islamic lands (Roxburgh 2010). The curious convergence of these very different understandings of what is comprised in the word "Islam" challenges the Islamic art historian to reconceptualize this term, not simply through the trope of culture but also through tropes of religion, released from epistemologies of modernist revivalism through the diverse history embodied in the material legacy itself.

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45

Islamic Art in the West: Categories of Collecting

Stephen Vernoit

Since the nineteenth century, the study of Islamic art has been closely dependant on the acquisition of objects and their relocation in Western lands. However, in many instances, the provenance and contextual meanings of the objects were lost in the process of transfer. Different values – scholarly, aesthetic, economic, and ideological – at both an individual and institutional level affected the interpretation of items in their new settings. This dislocation and transformation of values continues today, though new destinations have emerged, including some major museums in the Islamic world.

The process of transfer raises important issues for the study of Islamic art. For example, as various terminologies still current today had emerged among collectors and dealers by the early twentieth century, the circumstances in which they arose, and whether or not they are still appropriate, are valid concerns. Furthermore, by tracing the biographical chronology of objects in reverse, so to speak, one can gain new insights into their historical life, even glimpse altered meanings. It may also be the case that the investigation of traditionally based Islamic collections that continued to exist into the twentieth century can reveal older practices and values, since forgotten or overlooked.

During the twentieth century, scholars realized that the afterlife or reception of art – its reification and the adoption of new meanings – revealed as much as its production. The study of iconographic transformations across the centuries, as inaugurated by Aby Warburg, was an aspect of this intellectual repositioning. So, too, was the interest in the social history of art. As early as the 1930s, Walter Benjamin presented collecting as a potential act of redetermining value, even of re-creation (e.g., Benjamin 1937). Later, the postmodernist theorist Jean

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Baudrillard (1968) described it as a pathological activity, akin to obsessive-compulsive behavior and fetishism. Among art historians, Francis Haskell (1976) wrote compellingly on the social role of collecting and taste in England and France, and, in the following decades, a range of studies explored the implications of collecting, along with museum practices and displays. Historians of Islamic art have increasingly acknowledged these fields since the 1990s (Komaroff 2000; Vernoit 2000).

The role of collecting over the last two centuries in the creation of religious, national, and ethnic identities is now also widely accepted. During this period, an "art-culture system" emerged in which objects were recontextualized (Clifford 1988). In Islamic lands, as elsewhere, the process of acquisition involved relations of political and economic power; frequently, acquisition was portrayed as an act of salvage or aesthetic redemption. Objects received new values and meanings in their new settings, and such issues as cultural authenticity and adequate representation came to the fore.

While all of this is generally accepted, can one go further and establish meaningful categories that reflect the history of collecting Islamic art? One must be wary of creating significance where none prevails. Most collections were the outcome of chance circumstances and arbitrary decisions. However, they have also provided the items and catalogues that have structured debate. Over time, interest in Islamic items did develop from objects of curiosity to the connoisseurship of masterpieces, followed by a greater historical and social engagement. In other words, the nature of collecting has tended to reflect historical preoccupations.

At a basic level, too, there has been a relationship between collecting and classification from the nineteenth century onwards. The most fundamental modes of classification have been by materials and techniques (such as metalwork, ceramics, glass, textiles, or more specifically, luster, steel, and so on); nations or peoples (such as Persian, Arab, Turkish, Indian); religion (Islamic, or Sufi, Sunni, Shiʿi), or dynasties (such as Fatimid, Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal). Some terms such as "Saracenic," "Mohammedan," and "Moorish" are no longer fashionable. An alternative, more recent, approach has been to highlight the structure of society, such as court art, religious art, or secular objects made for the middle or lower classes. Many of these categories have a historical component.

Some collections, by accidents of good fortune, have existed over many generations, often evolving and acquiring new meanings. Some remain hidden for several decades or more. However, no collection is permanent. The most ephemeral, in a sense, are those assembled for an exhibition, often to mark an event, perhaps pertaining to an ideology. The objects gathered for such displays receive a measure of permanence as collections through an exhibition catalogue. Indeed, one can argue that most art books and web sites offer collections, albeit virtual.

The Religious Domain

In medieval Europe, numerous high-quality textiles, ivories, and other items acquired as gifts, through purchase, or captured in war, belonged to princes, who in turn donated them to churches and monasteries (Shalem 1996). There they remained across the centuries, if not removed in the Reformation or through the rise of secular nationalism. Some of the items played a role in religious rites. Thus, the Hispano-Muslim "lion strangler" silk from Vich near Barcelona,[1] datable to the 1100s, was among the vestments discovered in the late nineteenth century in the tomb of Bernard of Calvó, Bishop of Vich (d. 1243). Other objects, especially Hispano-Muslim carved ivory pyxides, were used as reliquaries. The "Pamplona casket" dated 395 (1004–1005), for example, was in the monastery of San Salvador of Leyre, where it stored relics of Nunilo and Alodia, the Christian sisters beheaded at Huesca during the reign of ʿAbd al-Rahman II (822–852). The casket was later transferred to the church of Santa Maria la Real de Sangüesa, and from there to Pamplona Cathedral, where its presence as an artifact was noted in the nineteenth century.[2]

The fourteenth-century Alhambra vase now in Stockholm underwent a longer journey.[3] In the sixteenth century, this vase was in a church in Cyprus, where pilgrims believed it to be a jar from the Marriage at Cana, at which, according to Christian tradition, Jesus transformed jars of water into jars of wine. In 1580, it was among the items of Ottoman booty from Cyprus, after which it was purchased by a German ambassador, and entered the treasury of the Habsburg emperor Rudolf II (r. 1572–1612). When the Swedish army conquered Prague in 1648, it became the property of the Swedish royal family. The vase is a good example of how an item could pass through several levels of meaning, in this case moving from the status of a holy relic to booty and treasury item (with a dismissive attitude towards the veneration of relics in Protestant lands).

These and other items were esteemed in a religious context because they were precious and exotic, and sometimes for their assumed biblical associations, Middle Eastern provenance, or connotations of conquest. However, a different system of values was also in operation. The ivory pyxis that contained a sacred relic fulfilled a different function from one displayed in a museum.

Cabinets of Curiosity and Other Collections

The many cabinets of curiosity created from the sixteenth century onwards tended to be confusing and unsystematic. They reflected an individual's personal agenda and their incompleteness precluded taxonomies. By the eighteenth century, a repeated refrain was that such collections had no clear arrangement and needed a catalogue (Impey and MacGregor 1985).

Among the more notable cabinets was that of Rudolf II, who formed an extensive Kunstkammer in Prague. Besides the Alhambra vase now in Stockholm, the items in his possession included weapons and other booty seized from the Ottomans, and examples of the Islamic arts of the book. The collection of Louis XIV, the "Sun King" (r. 1643–1715), included a Timurid jade cup obtained between 1684 and 1701;[4] however, the Persian verses on the cup were erroneously described in the inventory as "Chinese writing." Rubens and Rembrandt owned Islamic paintings, probably for information about costumes and settings. Thus, in Rembrandt's sale inventory of 1656, "eastern" miniatures and costume prints were grouped together (Slatkes 1983: 25; Subrahmanyam 2011).

In Britain, the royal collection was complemented by a range of private cabinets. The library and collection of the physician Hans Sloane (1660–1753) in London formed the basis of the British Museum. Sloane, a man of ample means, absorbed various private collections during his lifetime. Among his items was an inlaid brass astrolabe made for the Safavid ruler Shah Sultan Husayn in 1712[5] – a contemporary, not historic item. Sloane left his collection to the nation, according to his will, for "the use and improvement of physic, and other arts and sciences, and benefit of mankind." Thus, the founding collection in the British Museum reflected Sloane's interests and his haphazard acquisition of other collections.

The Enlightenment belief in intellectual advancement was based on scientific investigation, shared information, and the categorization of knowledge. Likewise, the developing interest in history depended on an analysis of information obtained from manuscripts, artifacts, curiosities, and antiquities. Individuals bestowed objects on the new repositories, encouraged by a sense of national loyalty or motivated by economic incentives, and libraries and museums commissioned agents to acquire items. The creation of collections was also facilitated from that time by the founding of auction houses, some of which had lasting reputations – Sotheby's was founded in 1744, Colnaghi's in 1760, Christie's in 1766, Bonhams in 1793, and Phillips in 1796.

In response to this activity, more catalogues were compiled. Islamic manuscripts and coins were the first items to receive attention, and the main collections were catalogued by the early nineteenth century. Joseph Reinaud's *Description des monumens musulmans du cabinet de M. le duc de Blacas* (1828) was the first catalogue of a broader Islamic collection. Much of this collection was sold to the British Museum in 1866.

Manuscripts in European Libraries

In medieval and Renaissance times, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts were of interest to Biblical and Classical scholars or the "natural philosophers." Then, following the creation of chairs of Arabic at European universities (Paris in 1539, Leiden in 1599, Cambridge in 1632, Oxford in 1638), there developed a more independent scholarly interest in the Islamic world. The expansion of trade into Asia created opportunities for obtaining manuscripts. In 1631, Archbishop Laud commissioned Edward Pococke, the chaplain of the Levant Company's agency in Ottoman Aleppo, to buy manuscripts for Oxford University. Three years later, Laud obtained a royal letter to the Levant Company requiring each ship to return with one Arabic or Persian manuscript, and made a similar request to the East India Company. Copies of the Qurʾan were excluded – possibly to avoid duplication or for religious reasons, which may have included the safety of travelers. In France, Louis XIV increased the number of oriental manuscripts in the Bibliothèque du roi, while his chief advisor Jean-Baptiste Colbert appealed to merchants and negotiators to acquire manuscripts. These acquisitions included a number of illustrated manuscripts obtained in Istanbul and Cairo (Orangerie des Tuileries 1977).

The largest collection of Islamic manuscripts in eighteenth-century Britain was in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Entry, however, was the privilege of the few, and the catalogue of the library's oriental manuscripts published in 1787 (containing entries for 1404 Arabic manuscripts, 527 Persian and 85 Turkish) gave little or no indication of paintings. The arts of the book were literally lost on the shelves. Libraries elsewhere also enlarged their holdings through bequests and purchases. Thus, the manuscript collection of Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, the Prussian *chargé d'affaires* in Istanbul from 1786 to 1790, was bequeathed to the Royal Library in Berlin in 1817. Diez's collection included five albums of paintings, drawings, and calligraphic work whose presence was likewise forgotten; they were not "rediscovered" until 1956 (Roxburgh 1995).[6]

Universal Museums

The idea of the universal museum was a European creation in which Enlightenment idealism fused with national acquisitiveness. Based in some cases on former royal collections, the universal museums were enlarged through colonial acquisitions, the incorporation of private collections, and purchases on the emerging market. The most significant to develop during the nineteenth century were the British Museum in London, the Louvre in Paris, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the complex of museums in Berlin. In these collections, objects from Islamic lands would form one component among many, sometimes within hierarchical global constructs (Necipoğlu 2012).

On opening to the public in 1759, the British Museum consisted of three departments, Printed Books, Manuscripts, and "Natural and Artificial Productions," out of which the Department of Antiquities was formed in 1807. A decision to enlarge the holdings of Islamic manuscripts and coins was made in 1825 when the collection of Claudius Rich (1787–1821), the East India Company's Resident in Baghdad, was purchased for £7500. Rich's collection was among the few that the

British Parliament gave a grant for in the "national" interest: grants were previously offered for William Hamilton's Greek and Roman vase collection in 1772, the Townley Marbles in 1804 and 1814, the Landsdowne manuscripts in 1807, and the Elgin Marbles in 1814–1815. As for Islamic artifacts, they entered the British Museum more gradually and especially from the mid-nineteenth century through the initiatives of Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897), an assistant in the Department of Antiquities from 1851 and Keeper of the newly created Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography from 1866 to 1896 (Caygill and Cherry 1997).

In Paris, the Musée central des arts (Louvre), which opened in 1793, contained treasures confiscated during the Revolution from the French royal family, aristocracy, and from churches and monasteries. By 1803, renamed the Musée Napoléon, it was enlarged with the spoils of war. Among the items transferred at the outset was a Fatimid rock crystal ewer from the Abbey of Saint Denis.[7] Several decades later, the inlaid bronze basin known as the Baptistère de Saint Louis, which had belonged, probably since the fourteenth century, to the treasury of the Sainte Chapelle in the Château de Vincennes, was transferred to the Louvre.[8] By the late nineteenth century, the Louvre was prepared to pay some high prices for Islamic artifacts.

Although the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg opened to the public in 1852, the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 1872, and the Berlin museums in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (as a latecomer Berlin sought to compete with established rivals), Islamic art did not become a significant component of these collections before the twentieth century. It may be pertinent to add that universalism, as a notion and state of mind, probably reflected the enhanced sense in the West of freedom of mobility and access, and the privilege to exercise this.

Special Collections

Along with the universal museums, some specialist libraries and museums were founded. In 1801, the East India Company established the India Museum in London in response to the activities of its employees. Objects and manuscripts belonging to the south Indian ruler Tipu Sultan, plundered at his capital of Seringapatam in 1799, entered the collection in the first decade; Tipu's musical tiger, displayed in the reading room from 1808, became a favorite with the public. Tipu's golden footstool to his dismembered throne, his howdah, armor, helmet, banners, watch, walking cane, handkerchief, and crimson velvet carpet were also deposited in the museum. Meanwhile, the large manuscript collection of Richard Johnson (1753–1807), who had been Assistant Resident at Lucknow, Resident at Hyderabad, and Chairman of the General Bank of India, was acquired in 1807. Johnson was paid 2500 guineas for 716 manuscripts and another 500 guineas for

64 albums of paintings containing over 1000 items. Examples of Iranian lacquerwork and large paintings on wood also entered this repository. The museum attracted visitors and, after the demise of the East India Company in 1858, the entire collection was transferred to the India Office. In 1879, a substantial part of the museum, separated from the library, was incorporated in the South Kensington Museum (Desmond 1982).

Some other collections were formed by academic bodies or societies. The Asiatic Museum of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, inaugurated in 1818, acquired coins and manuscripts under its first curator, Christian-Martin Fraehn. The Royal Asiatic Society, London, founded in 1823, formed a collection of manuscripts that included an illustrated portion, dated 714 (1314–1315) of Rashid al-Din's *Jami*ʿ *al-tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles). This manuscript, which entered the collection in 1841, was sold in 1980 and is now in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection.[9]

In France, the Musée de la céramique de Sèvres, inaugurated in 1824, and the Musée de Cluny in Paris, which opened in 1843 for medieval art, were interested in acquiring Islamic items. In Spain, where Islamic archaeological remains were tangible, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional was inaugurated in Madrid in 1871, and provincial archaeological museums were created in Cordoba, Granada, and Seville.

Museums of Applied Art and International Exhibitions

During the nineteenth century, the notion of a European tradition of "fine art" was bolstered by the creation of national collections of old master paintings. This understanding of art, which owed much to Vasari, had gained ground since the Enlightenment. Fine art dealt with nebulous civilizational concepts concerning the mind and spirit. Painting, in addition, seemed to provide confirmation of the emerging evolutionary view of history: the attainment of scientific perspective, chiaroscuro, and verisimilitude were interpreted as measures of cultural progress. By contrast, such interchangeable terms as "applied art," "decorative art," and "industrial art" were reserved for utilitarian artifacts that were perceived to lack this artistic dimension. Islamic items were considered prime examples.

The idea of a museum of applied art, which responded to the needs of manufacturing, emerged at the time of the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, and came to fruition with the opening of the South Kensington Museum in 1857 (renamed Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899). From the outset, this museum embraced non-European items for their technical and visual qualities, including contemporary artifacts purchased at the international exhibitions. The items were classified by materials and techniques, though not without acknowledgment of country of origin – classifications that reflected the displays at the international exhibitions (Figure 45.1).

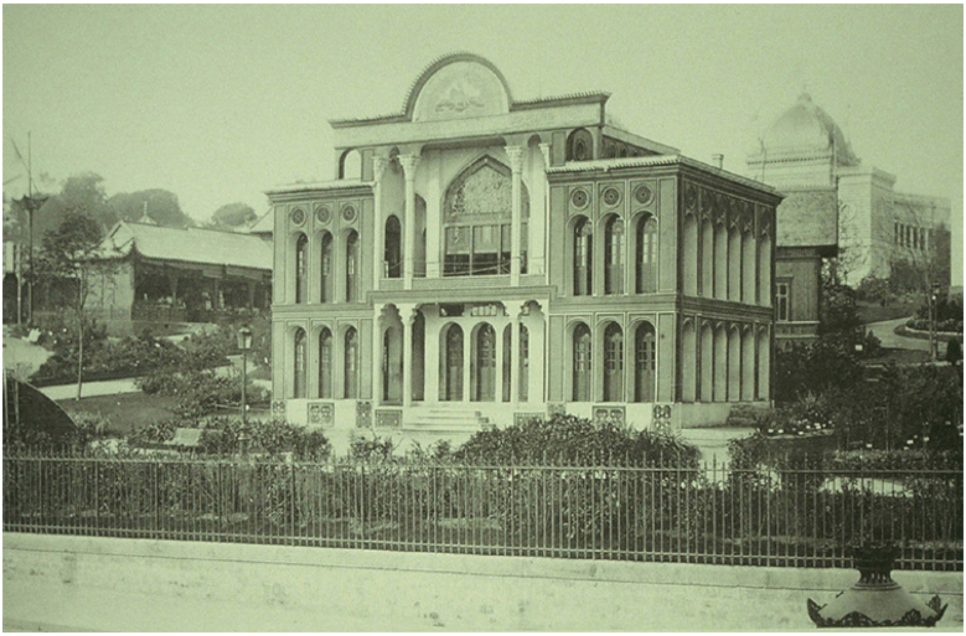

Figure 45.1 "Le Palais Persan," Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1878. Source: Glücq, *L'Album de l'Exposition 1878*, Paris, 1878.

Islamic items were also included in the *Special Exhibition of Works of Art* held at the South Kensington Museum in 1862, which displayed over 9000 objects lent by 500 collectors – the items in question were lent by Franks, Charles Drury Fortnum (1820–1899), John Henderson (1797–1878), Louis Huth (1821–1905), and others. In the 1860s, enthusiasm for Islamic pottery, especially "Persian" and "Hispano-Moresque" wares, was encouraged by curiosity about the origins of Italian majolica, and Fortnum was hired to catalogue all of these wares in the South Kensington Museum.

France took the lead in staging the international exhibitions, and each surpassed its predecessor in size and splendor (Çelik 1992). When the collection of "Dr. Meymar" – probably Husayn Fahmi, the Egyptian architect (*al-miʿmar*) (Volait 2009: 190, 198–199) – was displayed in Paris at the Exposition Universelle in 1867, the greater part of it was purchased by the South Kensington Museum. This collection included the monumental fifteenth-century minbar of Sultan Qaytbay.[10] At the Exposition Universelle of 1878, there was a display of artistic and ethnographic items in the Trocadéro Palace, among them Islamic objects belonging to Albert Goupil (1840–1884), Charles Schéfer (1820–1898), and others. The Exposition Universelle of 1889 featured a Rue de Caire, which incorporated architectural fragments from demolished Cairene buildings (Figure 45.2).

The acquisition of art from Iran accelerated when the South Kensington Museum took on Robert Murdoch Smith (1835–1900), the director of the

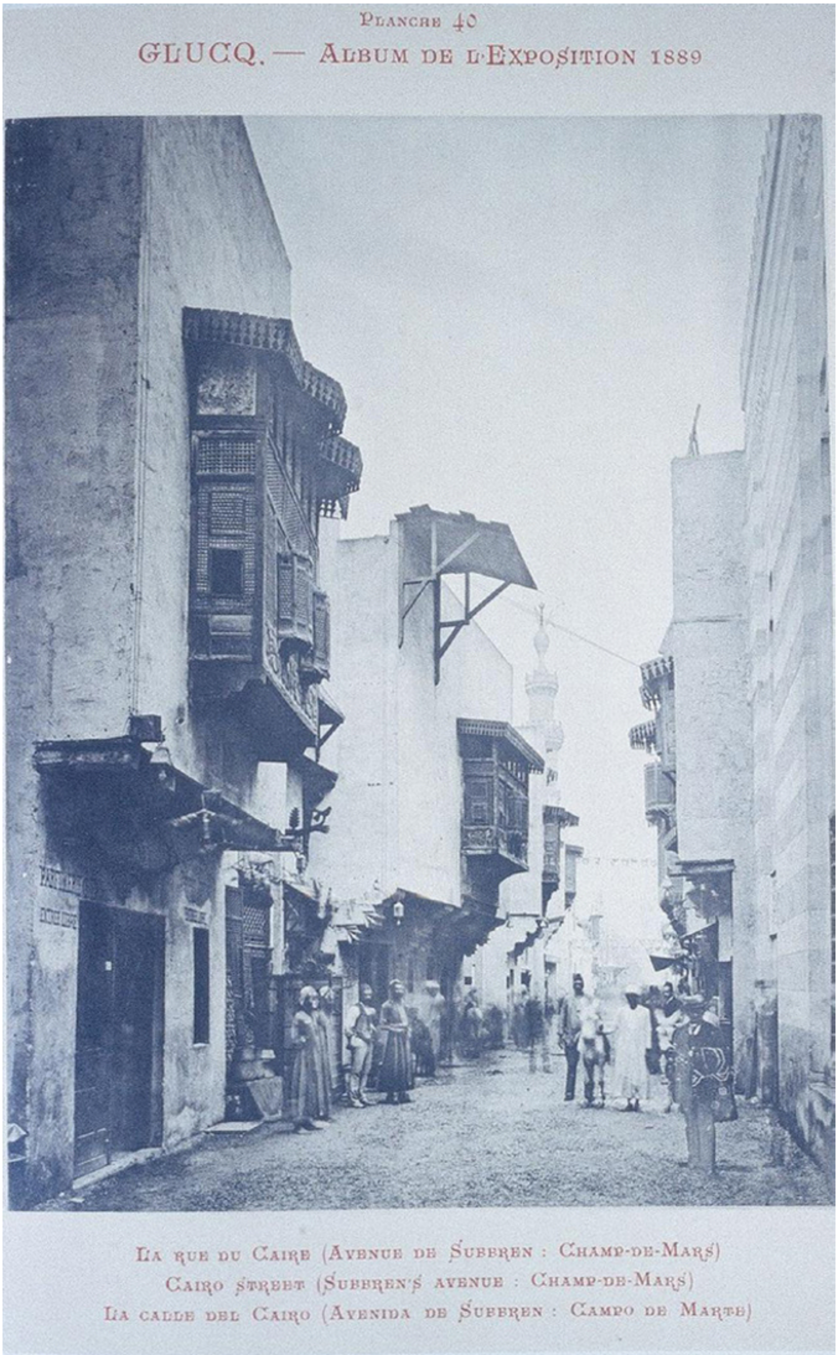
Planche 40
GLUCQ. — Album de l'Exposition 1889
La rue du Caire (Avenue de Suffren : Champ-de-Mars)
Cairo street (Suffren's avenue : Champ-de-Mars)
La calle del Cairo (Avenida de Suffren : Campo de Marte)

FIGURE 45.2 Cairo Street, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1889. Source: Glücq, *L'Album de l'Exposition 1889*, Paris, 1889.

Indo-European Telegraph Department in Tehran, as an agent (Helfgott 1990; Scarce 1973). From 1873 to 1885, his purchases enabled the museum to build up a formidable collection of artifacts at a relatively low cost. In 1875, Murdoch Smith bought in Tehran approximately 2000 items belonging to the Frenchman Jules Richard (1816–1891), a translator and photographer at the Qajar court. Further items followed, and an *Exhibition of Persian Art* was held at the South Kensington Museum in 1876, for which Murdoch Smith wrote the handbook *Persian Art* (1876). This was arranged by the various categories of "manufactures," and, at the same time, indicated the artistic achievements of the Persian "nation" over other regions of the Islamic world (Murdoch Smith 1876).

Objects were also obtained in India, which was under British rule. Caspar Purdon Clarke (1846–1911) visited the subcontinent in 1881–1882, authorized to spend £2000 from the South Kensington Museum and a further £3000 from the India Office, and sent to England about 3400 items. In 1883, the year after British forces entered Egypt, the South Kensington Museum purchased about 200 objects acquired there by Gaston de Saint-Maurice (1831–1905), who was chief equerry of the royal stables under Khedive Isma'il (r. 1863–1879).

Along with the increased importation of commercial carpets from Iran and Turkey to Europe in the late nineteenth century, greater interest was shown in historic examples. Alois Riegl was active at the Museum für Kunst und Industrie (Handelsmuseum), founded in Vienna in 1864, and Wilhelm Bode collected and studied carpets in Berlin (Enderlein 1995); both scholars published influential books about Islamic textiles. On the recommendation of William Morris, a founder of the arts and crafts movement, the superb Safavid Ardabil carpet dated 946 (1539–1540) was purchased by the South Kensington Museum in 1893 for £2500. In Paris, Islamic carpets entered the Musée des Arts décoratifs, supplied by the dealer-collector Jules Maciet (1846–1911), while inscribed pieces were shared between the Louvre and the Musée de Cluny (Labrusse 2007).

Ethnographic Collections

For those items brought to Europe that had no relevance in the industrial arts context, departments or museums of ethnography were founded. Items in this category had appeared in Europe over the centuries, but it was in the nineteenth century that they were isolated to form the material for a specific branch of inquiry – the words "ethnography" and "ethnology" date from the 1830s and 1840s. Ethnography was essentially "culture collecting" rather than "art collecting," with an emphasis on customs and practices. It differed from art history by virtue of being outside the constructed narratives of art. An ethnographic item was seen to have a collective or ritualized component; it was subsumed in cultural meanings. Ethnography could also deal with the ugly as well as the beautiful, thereby sidelining aesthetics.

Such collections were arranged geographically by racial or cultural groupings, though sometimes by functional categories. Ethnographic items and world antiquities were organized geographically at the British Museum from 1808 to the 1860s, after which ideas of social evolution affected the basis for display. An attempt at a scientific arrangement of groups of artifacts, based strictly on form, was made by A.H. Lane-Fox Pitt Rivers (1827–1900), which enabled him to explore their evolution through successive copying. This could be demonstrated with firearms and other weapons, as well as with various items from "primitive" cultures.

The Musée du Trocadéro was founded in Paris at the time of the Exposition Universelle of 1878, while displays of peoples in "villages," including a replica of an Algerian Kabylia village, could be seen at the Exposition Universelle of 1889. The first ethnographic museum in the United States was the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, founded in 1866, which later included items from North Africa and Asia.

In some instances, even high-quality Islamic artifacts were placed in the ethnographic category as illustrative of cultural practices. Ethnographic museums would also proliferate in the Soviet Union, where religious categories were avoided.

Private Collections: The Cult of the Art Object

A greater number of private collections contained Islamic items from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, which reflected the increased European involvement in Islamic lands. At the outset, "Hispano-Moresque" items inspired much of the interest, and prices rose accordingly (Vernoit 2010). The Spanish painter Mariano Fortuny (1838–1874) assembled a collection in Spain and North Africa that included several Alhambra vases. When Fortuny's collection was sold in Paris in 1875, some items were acquired by Charles Davillier (1823–1883). He, in turn, bequeathed most of his collection to the Louvre, the Bibliothèque nationale and the Sèvres Museum.

By the 1870s, however, "Persia" was considered the principal center of artistic creativity in the Islamic lands. Ottoman "Rhodian" and "Damascus" ceramics – both categories now labeled Iznik ware – were erroneously considered branches of "Persian" production (Murdoch Smith 1876). The French painter and archaeologist Auguste Salzmann (1824–1872), who resided on Rhodes from 1857 to 1865, obtained many ceramic items in the "Rhodian" relief-red color scheme that subsequently entered the Musée de Cluny. The principal private collections of "Rhodian" and "Damascus" wares in France were those of Baron de Monville (1794–1863), Schéfer, and Davillier, while in England the collections of Henderson, Fortnum, Huth, Franks, and others contained this pottery.

The painter Frederic Leighton (1830–1896) acquired Ottoman pottery and other items when he visited Rhodes in 1867 and Damascus in 1873. By that time, he was living in Leighton House, London. As an artist and man of taste, Leighton surrounded himself with beautiful objects, and incorporated tiles (many taken from Damascus) into his Arab Hall (1877–1879). By contrast, a different aim motivated Frederick du Cane Godman (1834–1919), who collected Islamic pottery and glass from about 1865: he wanted "to make an artistic and historical series illustrating that branch of Ceramic Art which comprises the works of the Moslem potters" (Godman 1901: v) – an evolutionary approach that befitted a collector who was foremost a naturalist.

An appreciation of antiquarian and aesthetic values in Islamic art was expressed in the *Exhibition of Persian and Arab Art* held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, 17 Savile Row, London, in 1885. This exhibition, which was open to members and invited friends, and merited an illustrated catalogue (Wallis 1885), displayed over 600 items belonging to private collectors in Britain, including Fortnum, Franks, Godman, Leighton, George Salting (1836–1909), and the painter Henry Wallis (1830–1916) (Figure 45.3). Ceramics, well represented in British collections, predominated, and the artistic achievement of "Persian" pottery was emphasized. Although many of the ceramic items on display were Ottoman Iznik ware, it was generally believed that Turkey was artistically barren. "Hispano-Moresque" items were not included but their continuing appeal found expression in a separate *Exhibition of Majolica and Hispano-Mauresque Ware* held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1887. Several artistic techniques were also much admired at this time, notably gilded and enameled glass (Vernoit 1998), and lusterware from Spain and Iran, which was increasingly appreciated by collectors

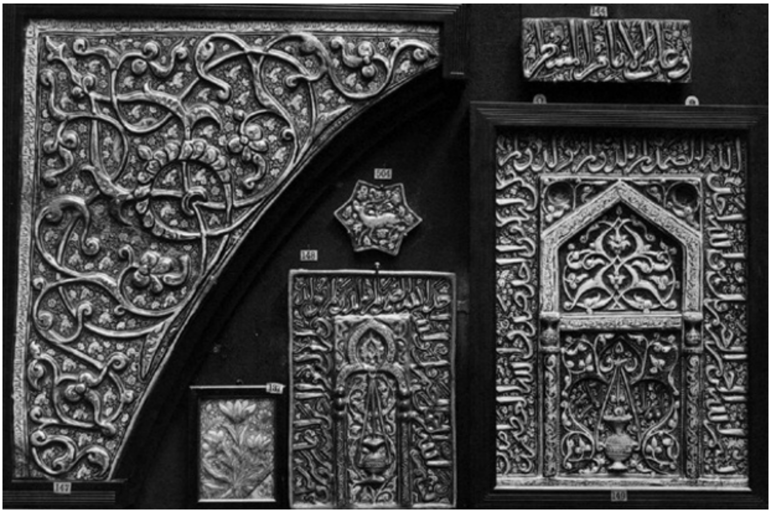

FIGURE 45.3 Exhibition of Persian and Arab Art, Burlington Fine Arts Club, London, 1885. Source: Plate from Henry Wallis, *Illustrated Catalogue of Specimens of Persian and Arab Art, Exhibited in 1885*, London, 1885.

from the 1870s. After the exhibition of 1885, Wallis wrote and illustrated catalogues of Godman's luster items.

From the 1880s, however, Paris became the main center in Europe for the emerging appreciation of Islamic art (Labrusse 1997, 2007; Labrusse and Hellal 2011; Roxburgh 2000). When Albert Goupil's collection was sold in 1888, the Musée des Arts décoratifs was interested in purchasing items, though they were no longer as cheap as when the South Kensington Museum made many acquisitions. It can also be noted that Goupil's brother-in-law was the Orientalist painter Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904): collecting and Orientalist painting tended to be mutually reinforcing activities.

Some of the enthusiasm initially directed towards Japanese art was transferred to the Islamic world. Louis Gonse (1846–1921), known principally for his interest in Japanese art, acquired Persian paintings. By the 1890s, as high-quality Japanese items became harder to obtain, Parisian dealers turned to new areas and promoted Islamic art. The state repositories also showed more interest.

Connoisseurship in Islamic Art

The development of connoisseurship in Islamic art was related to the rise of commercial galleries, and, ultimately, the new wealth in bourgeois society. Such galleries in Paris played a significant role in the formation of taste. By presenting a range of items as de luxe objects, they helped to break down preconceptions about "fine" and "applied" art. The rise of art nouveau also challenged these hierarchies. The basis of connoisseurship was careful observation and a visual memory for details. Stylistic categories were established, though sometimes with minimal concern for history or geography. The approach tended to separate objects from their settings, and there was hankering after the finest pieces.

The first exhibition in Paris devoted solely to Islamic art, the *Exposition d'art musulman* in 1893, displayed 2500 items. In the following years, the Louvre's Islamic collection was enlarged with items obtained from dealers or in bequests, notably those of Dr. Fouquet and Léon Dru in 1905, Charles Piet-Lataudrie in 1909, and Baron Delort de Gléon in 1912. While the Louvre accepted loose pages of paintings and calligraphy, manuscripts entered the Bibliothèque nationale. A number of dealers of Islamic art rose to prominence. Charles Vignier (1863–1934), based in Paris, sold items to many collectors, including the jeweler Henri Vever (1854–1942) (Lowry and Nemazee 1988). Armenian dealers with Middle Eastern connections, especially in Istanbul, Cairo, and Tehran, were also active. Dikran G. Kelekian (1868–1951), Hagop Kevorkian (1872–1962), and Kirkor Minassian (1874–1944) formed personal collections; Kelekian published his Islamic textiles and ceramics in illustrated catalogues in 1908 and 1910, respectively.

The art historians Fredrik Martin (1868–1933), Friedrich Sarre (1865–1945), and Philipp Schulz (1864–1920) combined their investigations with collecting.

When the Kaiser Friedrich Museum opened in Berlin in 1904, Sarre worked in the Islamic department and loaned his Islamic art collection, the most significant then in Germany, for display. He gave it to the museum in 1922.

As the commercial value of Islamic items increased, greater efforts were made to obtain them (Figure 45.4). Pottery was acquired at unofficial excavations at Rayy and Sultanabad in Iran, Ottoman Raqqa in Syria, Fustat in khedivial Egypt, and elsewhere. Martin excavated at Fustat in the winter of 1896 and returned with several thousand fragments. Kevorkian excavated at Sultanabad and Rayy in the 1900s. A detrimental consequence of commercial digging was that it obscured the origins of items and encouraged the use of vague terminology. The names of well-known sites were used by dealers for marketing rather than as precise scholarly categories. Emphasis was also placed on technical terms such as luster, *mina'i*, and *lajvardina* for sales purposes – a practice that still occurs.

The rise of connoisseurship in Islamic art was marked by the *Exposition des arts musulmans* of 1903 in the Pavillon de Marsan, Paris, which presented a wide range of items of high quality, lent by many collectors. In 1907, Islamic manuscript paintings and textiles were exhibited at the Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, and an *Exhibition of the Faience of Persia and the Nearer East* was held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, London. The largest exhibition, *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst*, held in Munich in 1910, displayed around 3600 items. As the title indicates, the exhibition stressed the idea of "masterpieces" of Islamic art, and a large lavishly illustrated commemorative catalogue was published (Lermer and Shalem 2010; Sarre and Martin 1912). Following this exhibition, an appeal to Parisian collectors led to the *Exposition d'art persan* at the Musée des Arts décoratifs in 1912, which brought together 500 items, primarily miniature paintings and manuscripts. This exhibition was also commemorated by an illustrated catalogue.

During these years, Martin concentrated his attention on Islamic textiles and manuscript paintings, and published lavish books on both. By writing in English, with "a salesman's proclivity for hyperbole" (Soucek 2001: 119), and including items from his collection, he may have wished to attract the attention of American and British collectors. By employing analogies with European painting, he argued that Islamic painting was comparable to the Western tradition. He stressed the role of individual genius, especially the Persian painter Bihzad, and discussed paintings as individual entities, even if they formed part of a manuscript cycle.

Significantly, Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), the American connoisseur of Italian Renaissance painting, collected Islamic art between 1910 and 1913, particularly the arts of the book. He showed a preference for works of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and those of known artists. The American financier John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) likewise purchased most of his Islamic collection in 1911 and 1912. Such cosmopolitan individuals were closely connected to the networks of dealers in Europe, particularly Paris.

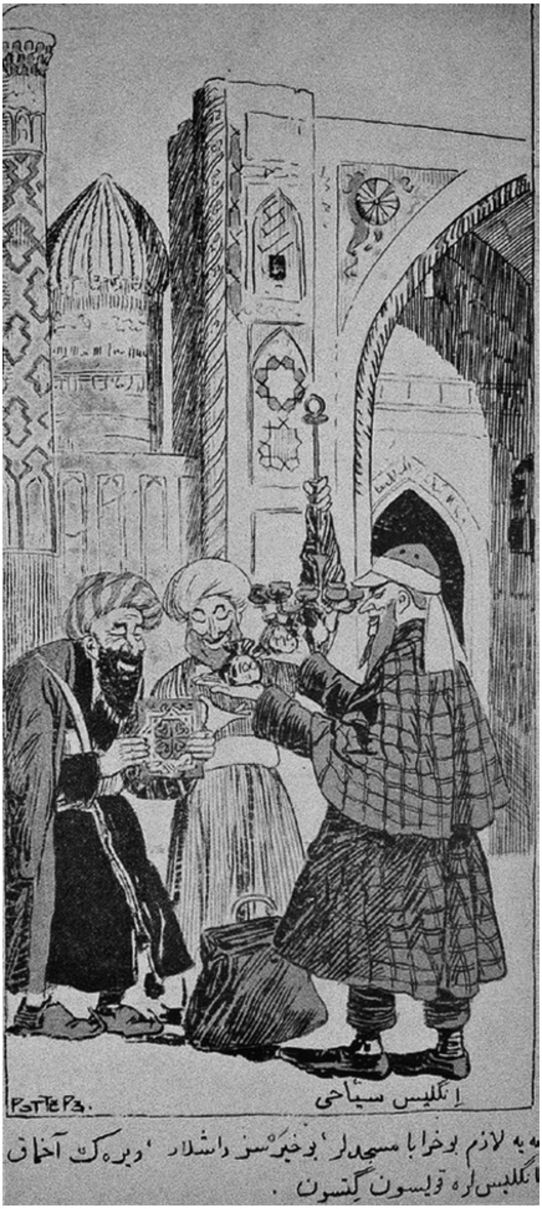
اِنگلیس سیاحی
ه به لازم بوخرا مسجدلر ‘ بوخیرسز داشلار ‘ ویره‌ک آخماق
انگلیسلره قولیسون گیتسون .

FIGURE 45.4 “English tourist” acquiring antiques. Source: Cartoon from *Mulla Nasrudin* (1908), reproduced in E.G. Browne, *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*, Cambridge, 1914.

There were some significant advances in scholarship before World War I, including archaeological investigations (Vernoit 1997). However, the war terminated this period of enthusiasm, after which high rates of inflation in Europe, followed by the depression of the early 1930s, ensured that the market remained subdued.

Nevertheless, the Louvre and Musée des Arts décoratifs benefited from more bequests. Beyond Paris, the cotton-merchant Antonis Benakis (1873–1954) established the Benaki Museum in Athens in 1931 with a collection that focused on the Mediterranean world.

Museums in Islamic Lands

The museums founded in Islamic lands from the late nineteenth century onwards, dealt with elsewhere in this volume, were, like their Western counterparts, linked to the process of nation building, but for the most they part reflected different priorities. Along with the introduction of antiquities laws, they provided a bastion against the removal of items to the West. They also encouraged the re-evaluation of religious objects as aesthetic and historical artifacts (Shaw 2003; and Shaw, CHAPTER 44).

Yet despite provisional legal measures, there were some instances of collusion in Western acquisition. In 1899, for example, the Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid II opened the otherwise locked Qubbat al-Mal (Dome of the Treasury) library in the courtyard of the Great Mosque of Damascus on the request of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who received the greater part of its collection as a gift. Wilhelm II, urged by Bode, also requested from the sultan the removal of the carved stone façade of the ruined desert palace of Mshatta, located in present-day Jordan. Although Osman Hamdi (1842–1910), the director of the Imperial Museum in Istanbul, voiced an objection, Abdülhamid II opted to avoid a diplomatic crisis by presenting the façade as a gift to the German emperor, who had it transported to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, then opening in Berlin. At that time, Mshatta was believed to be pre-Islamic in date, but, by 1910, the German archaeologist and Iranologist Ernst Herzfeld (1879–1948) had demonstrated its early Islamic, Umayyad origin. Such diplomatic gifts from the Ottoman sultan were made to further alliances with Germany (Marchand 2009).

Museums for antiquities and ethnography, and to a lesser extent Islamic art, were created in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco by the French. After World War I, museums were also established in Syria and Iraq under French and British rule, respectively. In the Republic of Turkey, archaeological and ethnographic museums were created in the new capital Ankara and elsewhere. The Ottoman antiquities law of 1906 remained in effect with slight modifications until 1973.

When exclusive French rights to excavate in Iran ended in 1931, American institutions came to the fore. The excavations at Rayy from 1934 to 1936 – after years of clandestine digging (Figure 45.5) – and at Nishapur from 1935 to 1940, with a final session in 1947, attracted funds because fine pieces might be discovered for American museums. However, by then, a new Iranian antiquities law stipulated that half of the material recovered belonged to the Iranian government. Pre-Islamic and Islamic items were housed in the Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran.

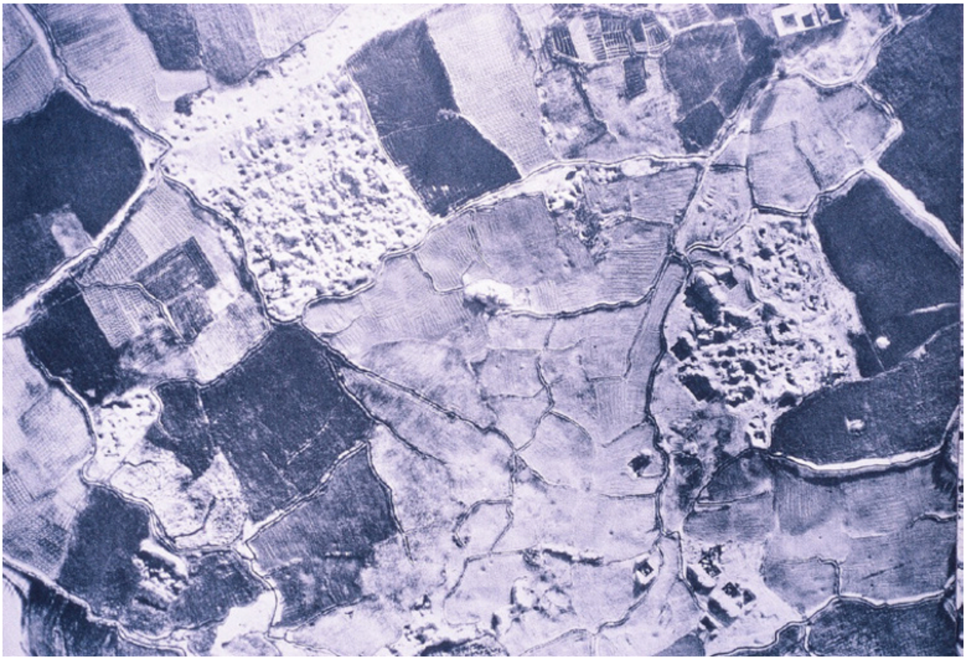

FIGURE 45.5 Excavations in the plain of Rayy. Aerial view taken June 1, 1936, at 5.40 a.m. “The honeycombed patches are the results of commercial diggings.” Source: E.F. Schmidt, *Flights over Ancient Cities of Iran*, Chicago, 1940.

American and Russian Museum Collections

The major American collections were formed during the twentieth century. A forerunner was that of Edward C. Moore (1827–1891) of Tiffany and Co., who collected Islamic and Far Eastern items to provide inspiration for his work as a silversmith. His Islamic collection entered the Metropolitan Museum, New York, in bequests of 1891 and 1908. The manuscripts and paintings donated by the carpet manufacturer Alexander Smith Cochran (1874–1929) entered the Metropolitan Museum in 1913. Archer Milton Huntington (1870–1955) gave his art collection to the Hispanic Society of America, which he founded in New York in 1904. Such dealers as Kelekian, Kevorkian, and Minassian conducted business in New York as well as Paris.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, purchased the Indian and Persian paintings of the Paris-based Russian aristocrat Victor Goloubew (1878–1945) in 1914, and the collection of Indian art formed by the Sinhalese scholar Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947) in 1917. James F. Ballard (1851–1931) presented 126 carpets to the Metropolitan Museum in 1922. The industrialist Charles Lang Freer

(1854–1919) opened the Freer Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, in 1923, and, in the same city, George Hewitt Myers (1875–1957) turned his private collection of carpets and textiles into the Textile Museum in 1925. The comprehensive collection of Henry Walters (1848–1931) formed the core of the Walters Art Museum, which opened in Baltimore in 1934, while the legacy of Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924) was the museum in her name in Boston. The American mining consultant Alfred Chester Beatty (1875–1968), who settled in London in 1913, collected Islamic paintings and the arts of the book, and later housed his collection in Dublin.

Arthur Upham Pope (1881–1969), who first visited Iran in 1925 and became art adviser to Riza Shah (r. 1925–1941), funded his research by acting as a consultant for museums and private collectors. The objects he purchased and sometimes restored were sold to museums at the usual profit of 10 percent (Rizvi 2007). Pope was also involved with exhibitions and the six-volume *A Survey of Persian Art* (1938–1939), which through lavish photographs influenced subsequent collecting practices (McWilliams 2003). In 1940, he organized the exhibition *Six Thousand Years of Persian Art*, which displayed over 2500 objects, in the Iranian Institute, New York. The emphasis on a long national heritage at this and subsequent exhibitions reinforced the ideology of nation states.

Various collections in the United States, as well as in Europe, served as memorials to their creators. Freer, Walters, and Gardner, for example, founded museums named after them – in some instances with a stipulation that the collection remain unmodified. An emphasis on individual donors and collectors also often provided a rudimentary form of classification within the larger museums. In a related fashion, some objects were informally named after their owners, such as the "Blacas ewer" and "Morgan bestiary." These names helped to integrate the object into the story of art.

The situation in the Soviet Union was very different. There, the Museum of Oriental Art was founded in Moscow in 1918, and the Oriental department at the Hermitage in 1920. Exhibits were gathered from institutions across Soviet Russia and private collections absorbed. Among the latter, the Islamic collection of Count Bobrinsky (1852–1927), who fled to France after the October Revolution, entered the Hermitage in 1925. This collection included the famous "Bobrinsky bucket" dated 559 (1163) (see Contadini, CHAPTER 17). While the names of collectors and donors had been indicated in Russian museums in Tsarist times, after the Revolution they were not made public. In the interest of historical materialism and the promotion of atheism, official Soviet policies opposed the concept of Islamic culture. (This was also happening in the Western world, but there the emphasis was on nationhood.) The Marxist approach was to divide museum collections into three socioeconomic stages: Feudalism, Capitalism, and the transitional era from Capitalism to Socialism.

Developments and Re-evaluations Since World War II

After World War II, the realigned political status of the Republic of Turkey, together with the discrediting of racial ideologies in the West, which had emphasized the arts of "Persia," encouraged a re-evaluation of "Turkish art." This change was signaled by the exhibition *Splendeur de l'art turc*, held at the Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, in 1953. Collectors also showed more interest in the Ottoman Turkish heritage. Thus the scholar-collector Edwin Binney III (1925–1986) acquired Ottoman items (now divided between the Harvard University Art Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art) as well as Indian paintings (bequeathed to the San Diego Museum of Art) (Overton 2012).

Another re-evaluation occurred with nineteenth-century Islamic art, which had been a neglected field. The collection of Qajar paintings formed in the early twentieth century by the brothers Harold and Leopold Amery was in that respect prescient; these paintings were purchased by Farah Pahlavi in the 1970s and are now in Tehran. In recent years, attention has also been directed at twentieth-century art. Nevertheless, in the auction rooms, monetary value is still often linked to age.

As Muslim collectors entered the art market, greater value was placed on calligraphy, which had also been neglected. One of the few exceptions was the calligraphic collection of Frederick Ayrton (1812–1873), subsequently sold; it had contained around 700 items acquired in Cairo. Furthermore, museums and libraries began to take more notice of this art form.

The Islamic art collection of the lawyer Christian David (1878–1960) was established in Copenhagen in 1945, and that of the Armenian oil magnate Calouste Gulbenkian (1869–1955) opened in Lisbon in 1969. In the United States, Doris Duke (1912–1993), who constructed her Shangri La villa at Hawaii in the late 1930s, purchased over the following years approximately 3500 items for her collection. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art became more significant for Islamic art on acquiring the collection of Nasli M. Heeramaneck (1902–1971), an Indian-born dealer based in New York, in 1973, and that of Maan Madina in 2002. The collection of Henri Vever, hidden since World War II, was acquired by the Sackler Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in 1986.

The impact of a private collection is often related to the influence of published catalogues. For example, the Keir Collection of Edmund de Unger (1918–2011) was documented in five catalogues. The Nour Collection of Nasser D. Khalili (b. 1945), who amassed around 20 000 items of Islamic art, was lavishly published in a multivolume series.

Since the mid-twentieth century there has also been a movement away from the classification of museum items by materials, or as decorative arts, towards geographical or cultural terminology. At the Victoria and Albert Museum in

London, where the departments were organized by materials, an Islamic gallery was created in the 1950s, but the old arrangement lingered largely unaltered until 2002, when an Asian Department that included Far Eastern, Indian, and Middle Eastern sections was formed. This reorganization probably acknowledged the fact that donors, especially from overseas, tend to have a cultural focus. In 2003–2004, the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum, which had housed the Islamic collection, evolved into a Department of Asia and Department of the Middle East. The latter now embraces all periods of that region, including Ancient Near Eastern and ethnographic items. At the Metropolitan Museum, the Islamic collection was elevated from a subdepartment in the Department of Decorative Arts into a Department of Islamic Art in 1963, though from 2011, following a comprehensive gallery redesign, the museum display was renamed "Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia and Later South Asia." At each of these museums, the use of the term "Islamic" was not favored in the early twentieth-first century. However, at the Louvre, the Islamic section, housed in the Département des antiquités orientales since 1945, became the Département des arts de l'Islam in 2003.

Meanwhile, some notable museums were opening in the Gulf region, underpinned by superior purchasing power. These were pan-Islamic collections in new areas, where nationalism was taking a different form, unlike the traditional cultural centers. The first was the Museum of Islamic Art in Kuwait City, which opened in 1983; during the Iraqi invasion in 1990, however, the museum was looted and the building damaged. The Gulf state of Qatar entered the art market from 1997 and its Museum of Islamic Art, designed by the architect I.M. Pei, opened in Doha in 2008. The Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization in the United Arab Emirates opened the same year. The use of the term "Islamic" was prominent in each instance, accompanied by the creation of ambitious museum buildings to house the newly formed collections. A further museum, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, designed by Jean Nouvel, is due to open in 2017. Throughout these years, London and Paris, with their respective auction houses, were important centers for the trade in Islamic art. The Aga Khan Museum initially sought London as a permanent venue but eventually turned to Toronto; its building, designed by Fumihiko Maki and Charles Correa, was inaugurated in 2014.

Such recently formed collections, relying extensively on what is available in the international art market, reflect the new global system in which former East–West dichotomies are being redefined. A further ramification of this is the revamping of museum displays in the West (e.g., at the Metropolitan Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Louvre), financed by polities or individuals from Islamic lands, complemented by a new readiness of some Western museums to loan Islamic items to Middle Eastern museums (e.g., to the Louvre Abu Dhabi) (Junod *et al.* 2012).

Dispersal and Dismemberment

While collecting has brought together objects in new configurations, it has also been responsible for dispersing related objects. Thus, a candlestick (with its base missing) dated 799 (1396–1397) and ordered by Timur for the mausoleum of the Sufi shaykh Ahmad Yasavi in Turkestan, which was in Georges Marteau's bequest to the Louvre in 1916, is one of a set of six pieces originally made for the shrine. Four of them are still in Turkestan and the other is in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

Collecting has also had a direct physical impact on objects. Any form of movement can cause damage and the new locations may prove unsafe. Towards the end of World War II many carpets were destroyed in Berlin and others disappeared. The Mshatta façade, shattered into a heap of fragments, was subsequently reconstructed. Another form of destruction has been the dismemberment of manuscripts for economic gain. European illuminated manuscripts had certainly been mutilated over the centuries. Around 1828, the children of Philip Hanrott, who owned the fourteenth-century Carmelite Missal, apparently cut out the initials to decorate scrapbooks. John Ruskin, too, suffered no remorse scissoring missals. However, from the late nineteenth century, in a different financial environment, the dismemberment of Islamic manuscripts became rife, enabling owners to maximize profits at sales. The procedure destroyed the manuscripts, including the relationship between the images and the text.

A forerunner in this new commercial setting was Sidney Churchill (1862–1921), who worked for the Indo-European Telegraph Department in Tehran in the early 1880s, and sold manuscripts and other items to the British Museum and South Kensington Museum. He removed a miniature painting of Khusraw and the Lion from a copy of Nizami's *Khusraw va Shirin* (dated 1042 (1632) on one of the paintings),[11] and had this image mounted on card with an illuminated border by Mirza Razi Taliqani in 1885,[12] a procedure he also followed elsewhere. More significant, however, were the activities of Martin, who dismembered and dispersed a number of manuscripts by selling their folios individually (Roxburgh 1998; Welch 1985: 26). An early sixteenth-century copy of Saʿdi's *Gulistan* (Rose-garden), with illuminated borders attributed to Sultan Muhammad, may have been in one piece in Schulz's collection before the folios were dispersed in the 1900s. The dealer Georges Demotte (1877–1923), based in Paris, dismembered by 1913 the magnificent *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) created in Ilkhanid Iran around 1330. The operation involved splitting the recto from the verso of some folios, which enabled Demotte to sell two paintings separately rather than as one folio. Another *Shahnama*, reputedly commissioned by the Safavid shah Ismaʿil II in 1577 – the pages that provide the information are now missing – which was in one piece in Demotte's possession when exhibited in Paris in 1912, was also broken up for sale. As the sale of text pages was not profitable, it was considered acceptable to treat manuscripts in this way. The aesthetic properties of a painting were thought to be self-sustaining statements, meaningful in isolation.

The practice even occurred in more enlightened times after World War II. The *Shahnama* of the Safavid shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524–1576), a manuscript of 258 paintings considered the cynosure of Persian painting, and probably inspired by the Ilkhanid *Shahnama* mentioned above, was intact when its French owner, Maurice de Rothschild, died in 1957. However, Arthur A. Houghton Jr. (1906–1990), who acquired the manuscript in 1959, sold individual pages from the 1970s onwards. When Houghton died, 120 pages remained; these were sent to Iran in 1994 in exchange for a painting by Willem de Kooning. One of the pages, bought in 1977 by Stuart Cary Welch (1928–2008), was sold at Sotheby's, London, on April 6, 2011, for £7.43 million ($12.2 million), a new record for an auctioned Islamic "work."

Should we conclude that the preservation of material culture depends on prior decontextualization? In the early twentieth century, the interest of collectors was largely aesthetic and personal, whereas now there is more appreciation of the historical context of items. In this respect, the study of collecting does attempt to redress the subject for a postcolonial era – though, as if by a rearguard action, the recent emphasis on collectors in museum displays and scholarship may also strengthen the Western narrative of art. As with all things, there are different viewpoints, depending on where one stands. A task for the future is to reconcile them.

Notes

1 Cleveland, Museum of Art, 1950.146.
2 Pamplona, Museo de Navarra (since 1953).
3 Stockholm, National Museum of Fine Arts, NMK 47.
4 Paris, Louvre, MR 199.
5 London, British Museum, OA +369.
6 Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Diez A. fols. 70–74.
7 Paris, Louvre, MR 333.
8 Paris, Louvre, LP 16.
9 Khalili Collection, MSS727.
10 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1050-1869.
11 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 364-1885.
12 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, L.1613-1964.

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46

Islamic Arts and the Crisis of Representation in Modern Europe

Rémi Labrusse

Crisis in Western Identity

It is generally accepted that the French expedition to Egypt (1799–1801) ushered in a new European understanding and appreciation of Islamic arts and architecture. From the 1820s on, the Romantic infatuation with Spain is also often cited as a decisive factor, as the Nasrid palace of the Alhambra became one of its star attractions. More generally, colonial imperialism and its spectacularization through universal and colonial exhibitions, from 1851 on, are seen as a powerful incentive for a widespread but ambivalent assimilation of Islamic motifs into Western culture in the second half of the century. In this context, artistic "Orientalism" can be seen, to some extent, as an outcome of scientific "Orientalism." The passion for representational truth in the innumerable visual or narrative depictions of the "Orient" was undoubtedly prompted by the flourishing of scientific knowledge (in linguistics, history, religious sciences, and so on), the expanding connoisseurship and private collecting of Islamic objects, the birth and rise of a Western history of "Islamic arts and architecture," and the creation of specialized departments in the museums of decorative arts, soon to be followed by prominent universal museums.

The contemporary image of Islamic arts and culture in the West was also a byproduct of cultural devastation, at a level of violence, thoroughness and radicalness, which was at once enacted and bemoaned by its perpetrators. A sense of triumph, typical of a conqueror's mentality, went hand in hand with a specifically

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modern nostalgia for a vanishing past, awestruck by the process through which past greatness – whose captivating memory had been entrenched in the European consciousness for centuries – collapsed. The political, economic, and symbolic violence enacted by the Western industrial nations on other societies was proportionate to a giddy feeling of their own precariousness, spurred by the growing suspicion that progress, as irresistible as it seemed, consistently failed to produce its own symbolic order. The very means that ensured that these nations maintained an unchallenged superiority over the rest of the world themselves threatened their identity. The interest in a disappearing "Islamic" visual culture cannot be dissociated from this radical crisis of self-representation, provoked by the specific, self-centered anxiety of a culture whose extreme technical efficiency and cultural power was paradoxically coupled with an extreme sense of historical and metaphysical fragility.

Aesthetically, the most obvious sign of such cultural disruption was the divorce between art and science: science's constant inventions looked boldly towards the future, to the detriment of things past, while the arts looked obstinately backwards, multiplying references to the past in an attempt to repair the rift between past and present, to keep real or imagined traditions alive – be they classical, medieval, Renaissance, or exotic. In the art world, this conflicting situation led either to a simplistic anti-modern stance – denouncing a future-oriented scientific and technical pseudo-culture and inventing parallel, imaginary worlds – or, in a more complex way, to utopian hopes of bridging the gap between logic and imagination, through the development of new, scientific principles of artistic creation.

Following this, the nineteenth-century Western rediscovery, study, and use of Islamic arts served two goals concurrently: on the one hand, they supplied props for the "Oriental scenery" in painting, sculpture, architecture, and theatrical settings of all sorts, providing an imaginary escape from the real world; on the other, they were admired as the fascinating results of a fusion between art and science, eliciting the dream of an "Oriental" Renaissance capable of resolving the predicament of an industrial culture. Invariably determined by the present situation of the West, and leading to creative misreadings, the reception of "Islamic" aesthetics in Europe and the United States during the second part of the nineteenth century was nonetheless complex, either masking the reality of destruction through a dreamlike, cautiously controlled image of Oriental otherness, or providing tools to create a new body of visual forms attuned to the requirements of global industrial production.

Orientalism

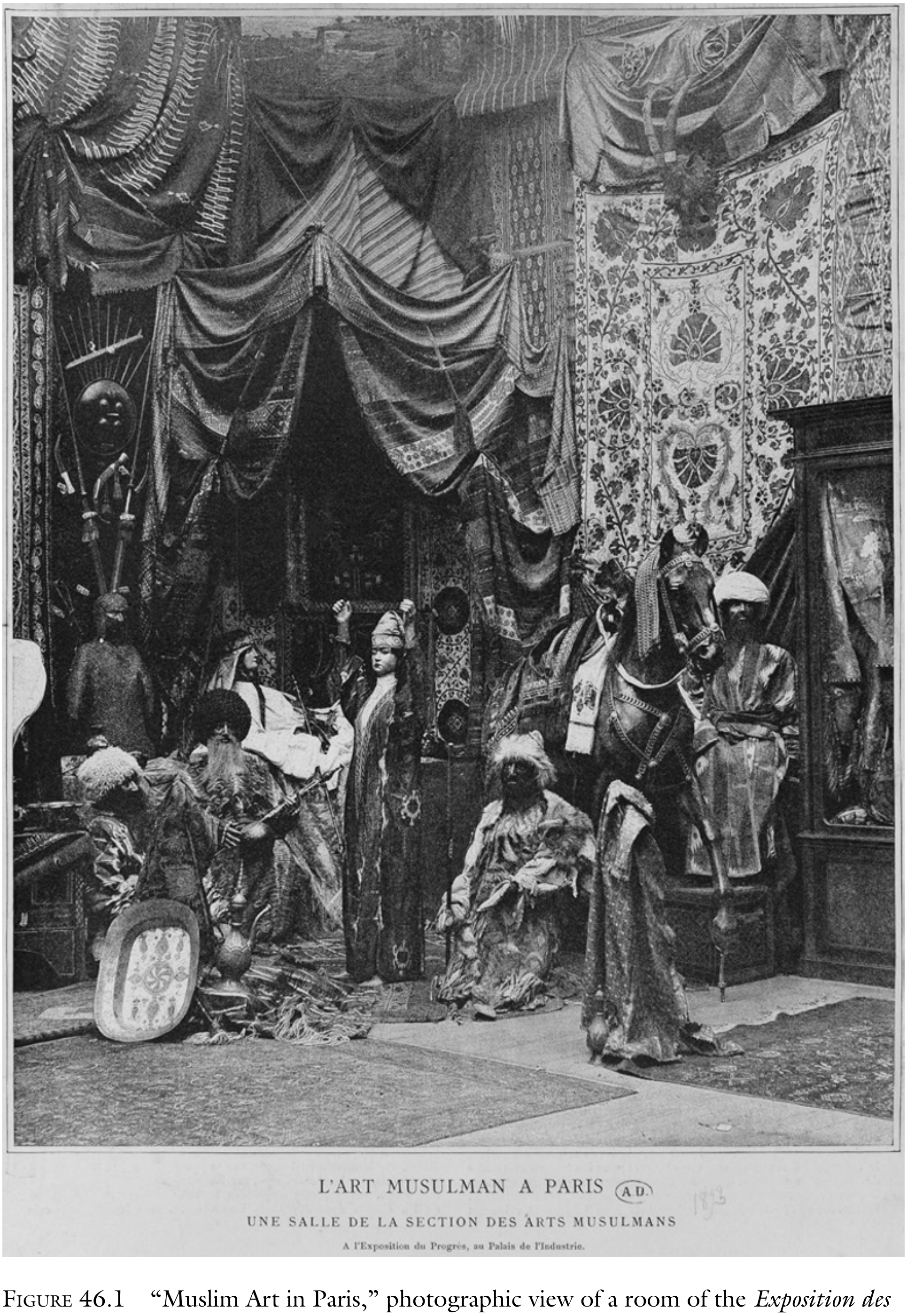
Orientalism supplies its consumers with an image of the "Orient," a large master-narrative built upon an age-old network of recurring patterns, tightly knitting together literary fictions with visual images – palm trees and camels, sensuous women, cruel fighters and despots, luxury goods lavishly displayed in hidden courtyards, and so on. Depictions immediately suggested legends, and vice versa. This system of narrative images was – and still is – sufficiently familiar to the Western mind as to be spontaneously evoked through brief allusions: a hint of "Alhambrism" on a small Victorian trinket was enough to conjure in the minds of its users the atmosphere sought after by the readers of Washington Irving's *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832, revised 1851) or of Victor Hugo's *Orientales* (1829: Molinari 2010; Villafranca Jimenez 2009).

Essential to this process is the question of representation, with its aesthetic but also political inferences. This diffracted, fictitious image of the "Orient" re-enacted a real process of political submission simply by bringing the visual appearance of Islamic cultures under the mediating control of the Western artist, who imposed his laws of mimetic discursive representation on objects and visual environments fundamentally alien to such a doctrine. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that the representation of Islamic objects and buildings increased in Orientalist images of the nineteenth century as the impact of colonial imperialism deepened. It greatly facilitated private and official journeys, in which visual artists were involved, either on their own or as members of military or diplomatic missions; some of them concluded their travels by longer stays abroad, notably in Cairo (Volait 2009). Through their sketches – several of which were reworked in state-funded publications – visual knowledge of Islamic arts and architecture rapidly increased, each generation laying claim to a deeper understanding. From the 1860s on, in paintings by artists-travelers like the Englishman John Frederick Lewis (d. 1876), the Frenchman Jean-Léon Gérôme (d. 1904), or the Russian Vasily Vereshchagin (d. 1904), among hundreds of others, the art historical accuracy of the details, from monuments to ceramic revetments and all kinds of artifacts, reached a peak: many of the carefully depicted objects, interiors, or buildings in their compositions are now identifiable *in situ* or in museum collections (Labrusse 2011: 153–173).

Consciously or not, it was hoped that this growing documentary seriousness would not challenge but, on the contrary, reinforce the imaginary quality of the Oriental dream. At this moment in Western visual culture, transformed by photography and the claims of positivist realism, the myth had to be shored up with documents. These documents were not meant to serve any truth but to strengthen the verisimilitude of a story, on the enduring existence of which producers and consumers, that is, artists and spectators, agreed.

A careful, strategic selection of "authentic" Islamic artistic relics as elements of the décor made this possible. The secret was to accentuate the minute and eye-catching depictions of individual motifs, as isolated, historically decontextualized signifiers. No matter if objects and ornamental details belonged to different periods and had diverse geographical origins; what was of paramount importance was that their juxtaposition looked medieval and colorful, lustrous and time-worn, dusty and neglected, in order to suggest both a splendor lost to the unredeemable backwardness of its creators, and the enduring evocative power of Western images or imitations. This guaranteed the legitimacy of a narrative – the story of the "Orient" – and the superiority of a language – the Western mode of representation, alone able to revive the past and master the gap between dream and reality. By the end of the century, differences were systematically emphasized between medieval–Oriental and modern–Western societies, in the vast body of Orientalist images flourishing all over Europe and the United States, for a bourgeois clientele and visitors to places of entertainment (World Fairs' pavilions, gambling casinos, theatres, baths, zoos, and so on). This strategic construction of past "Islamic" glory is exemplified by the concomitant organization, in Paris in 1893, of the first international exhibition of "Muslim" art, with a variety of remarkable objects displayed in theatrical environments (Figure 46.1), and the first exhibition of the French Society of "Orientalist" painters, as they decided to name themselves (Marye and Bénédite 1893; Roxburgh 2000). Real Islamic works (some of them prominent masterworks) were already fictionalized by their mode of display and helped the spectators to instantly accept their exotic utilization in the neighboring paintings and drawings; art historical connoisseurship and artistic representation collaborated for an event which was also meant as a celebration of French colonialism in Algeria.

The Orientalist system, however, was not as efficient as it was meant to be. Under its glittering surface, melancholy and bereavement lurked, caused by the feeling that the process of discovery was involved in the destruction of these fascinating environments. The more they were explored, exploited, and analyzed, the more they appeared divested of their original life. The quest for authenticity seemed doomed to fail, as the Orientalist artist was simultaneously the archivist and the destroyer of a disappearing world, "gathering the last sparks of a fairy-tale décor of The Thousand and One Nights," as Léonce Bénédite, founder of the French Society of Orientalist Painters, stated in 1893 (Marye and Bénédite 1893: 167). What followed was a mixture of nostalgia and cynicism, in the vast multifarious Orientalist production of the second half of the nineteenth century. In such images, melancholy musings over ruins, fragments, and spoils – and an insistent rhetoric of decay – say more about Western contemporary anxieties than about the historical reality of the Other. Faith in a founding myth crumbled into disenchanted games, facile, almost mechanical answers to commercial demands. Some internationally successful painters like Gérôme in France consciously played upon this transformation of a myth into mass entertainment, full of overt clichés in which neither artists nor spectators believed any longer (Allan and Morton 2010).



L'ART MUSULMAN A PARIS (A.D.) 1893

UNE SALLE DE LA SECTION DES ARTS MUSULMANS

A l'Exposition du Progrès, au Palais de l'Industrie.

FIGURE 46.1 “Muslim Art in Paris,” photographic view of a room of the *Exposition des arts musulmans*, Paris, Palais de l’Industrie, 1893.

Ornamental Revolution

Concurrently, from the 1820s on, a scientific perception of Islamic aesthetics arose, coming to a complete formulation in Britain and France in the 1850s and continuing to develop all over Europe and the United States until the turn of the century. The starting points were more or less the same as for Orientalist representations: a passion for accuracy, frequently rooted in personal travel experiences, and a need to address the dilemmas of Western modernity. But the conclusions reached were dissimilar: instead of reinforcing the academic doctrine, artists (chiefly architects) strove to find an autonomous definition of decorative patterns. At the heart of the problem lay the question of ornament (Necipoğlu 1995: 61–71).

In the mid-century, harsh criticism was increasingly leveled at contemporary European ornamentation, without leading, for all that, to a satisfactory reform. Ornaments were thought of as uninventive, illegible, disorderly, and neurotically covering objects and walls, derived from inappropriate historical models rather than anchored in logic, oblivious of the requirements of manufactured mass-production. To a growing minority of professionals, the reign of historicist representational ornaments – appertaining to history and the fine arts as opposed to reason and sciences – were seen as an alarming sign of the structural weakness of Western modern culture beneath its triumphant guise. What was at stake was not just visual pleasure but the meaning of modernity, in which aesthetic, social, and philosophical dimensions could not be distinguished. After the disappointing exhibitions of decorative models by the greatest industrial nations at the London Great Exhibition of 1851, two leading prophets of this ornamental disaster, the architect Owen Jones (d. 1874) in England and the writer and administrator Léon de Laborde (d. 1869) in France, gave voice to a widely shared feeling by linking their aesthetic criticism to a global cultural anxiety. Jones wrote in 1853, "There is the same disorder in the art as skepticism in the mind. This acting generation on generation, each descends lower and lower. Children born in an age of ugliness cannot hope to have their instincts quickened for the beautiful … That which corrupts their taste debases their morals, destroys their powers, and promotes their misery" (Jones 1853: 272).

Echoing his English friend's judgment, in 1856 de Laborde in turn denounced "two generations of gravediggers," led by a "fanatical fetishism" to make servile copies of old and lifeless ornamental patterns and to impose them as the rule, and made an urgent plea for sanitizing this "sepulchral atmosphere" (Laborde 1856: vol. 1, 399–400).

The same fear of cultural morbidity, of which proliferating historicist ornaments were the symptoms, was voiced repeatedly over the next decades. Such feelings could have led to an anti-modern stance, rejecting the industrial age as a whole. In order to avoid such a pessimistic view, however, many theorists of ornament tried to extend the ideology of progress to the realm of artistic forms, transforming self-hatred into creative self-criticism, converting imprecations into propositions and the obsession of decline into hopes for a Renaissance. Modernity was not itself at fault but only lacked an art able to support it and enliven it symbolically. A rational theory of ornamentation, freed from its connection to history and the fine arts, was then needed, in which the same laws would govern the processes of material production and formal invention. At the crossroads of art and industry, ornamentation, it was believed, could diffuse on both sides the clear light of a rational design.

At this point, Islamic ornaments provided a much-desired solution. While they were perceived in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as belonging to the realm of pure fantasy (as in Rococo "turqueries" or Romantic follies), a rationalist reading was developed by a small but passionate and influential circle of European connoisseurs and architects who, from the 1820s onwards, were chiefly responsible for the first knowledgeable and correctly illustrated histories of Islamic art and architecture (Labrusse 2007, 2011; Vernoit 2000). These early studies appeared as introductions to and comments on the plates of architectural and pattern books, meant for a readership of professionals as much as the literati, with pragmatic as much as scientific purposes. Descriptions were mingled with precepts. Central to these practical precepts was the law of simplicity, conferring maximal effect to a structural ornamentation, far from any eulogy of "Oriental" arbitrariness and complication of design. An early example is to be found in the text accompanying the monumental plates on Cairene Islamic monuments published in Paris by the architect and engineer Pascal Coste (d. 1879), after his long Egyptian sojourn in the service of the viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad ʿAli (r. 1805–1848). According to Coste, "Arab architects sought to produce powerful effects by the simplest means, down to the smallest details" (Coste 1839: ii). Immediately afterwards, Owen Jones – who had admired Coste's first plates printed in Paris in 1834 and conversed with the author in London in 1842 – published his masterwork on the Alhambra, under his deceased friend Jules Goury's name and his own, in which the constructive formula of the *muqarnas* is elucidated, as is the exclusive use of primary colors in various proportions and positions. In keeping with Coste and others, like Charles Texier (d. 1871) in France or Friedrich Maximilian Hessemer (d. 1860) in Germany, Jones tirelessly repeated the lessons of functionalist simplicity, drawn from his early Alhambresque discoveries (Varela Braga 2016). In his later works and teachings, he wrote, "From the Moors [we may learn] the great powers of geometrical combinations, and the immense value of the repetition of the most simple elements, as producing grandeur and richness" (Jones 1853: 297). Somewhat later, in the 1870s, the same can be said of architectural surveys by young French rationalist architects – of early Ottoman Turkey by Léon Parvillée (d. 1885), fourteenth-century Algeria by Edmond Duthoit (d. 1889), Mamluk Egypt and Syria by Jules Bourgoin (d. 1908) – under the auspices of the influential rationalist French architectural historian Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (d. 1879). The latter stated in his 1873 "Preface" to Jules Bourgoin's *Arab Arts*, "At first sight, we feel giddy before these entangled webs of lines and curves … but if we make use of the analytical method, if we start by tracing the master lines of the system, we realize that the formula of these complicated compositions is one of perfect simplicity" (Bourgoin 1868–1873: n.p.).

This cardinal virtue of simplicity made Islamic ornaments ideally fitted to a technological process of serialized production. But it was also inspired by a Platonic philosophy of Being, proudly heralded as proof of the ontological significance of ornaments in general. Far from being accidental and superficial, they were considered as visible expressions of the ideal structure of Being and, for this reason, regularly compared to music. The musicality of pure ornamentation had to overcome the discursiveness of imitative images. An "*ut decor musica*" principle of Islamic provenance was opposed to the "*ut pictura poesis*" principle of the Greco-Roman academic doctrine. Regarding his own reconstructions of the *muqarnas* of the Alhambra, Jones, among many others, stated, "It is composed of 5000 pieces, being combinations of the same seven, based upon three primary forms … in fact, they are infinite, like the combinations of the seven notes of the musical scale" (Jones 1853: 296). The logical production of an infinite variety of forms from a finite set of constructing elements stemmed from the overruling cosmological principle, following which every existing Being in the world proceeds from a constellation of noumenal structures. Rather than superficially reflecting Nature's visible productions (as in mimetic representations), the task of ornamentation was to re-enact the process of creation, making visible the invisible. Geometrical and functional knowledge resolved into Platonic metaphysics, as formulated by Jones at the start of his famous 1856 *Grammar of Ornament*: "That which is beautiful is true; that which is true must be beautiful" (Jones 1856: 23). Such a vision greatly enhanced the intellectual status of the decorator. Just as the Renaissance invention of one-point perspective had conferred a new intellectual prestige on painters, the scientific and metaphysical meaning of ornamental compositions was expected to give an accomplished theoretical status to the "designer." Consequently, "Arab," "Moorish," "Saracen," "Indian," "Persian," or (to a lesser extent) "Turkish" craftsmen were described as simultaneously mathematicians and philosophers: design and craftsmanship were one and the same thing for these anonymous forerunners of an ideal modernity – something which made them more directly commendable, for instance, than their Western medieval counterparts. It was believed that science and culture, which industrial societies had separated, had been kept united in the East until the present day: one had to "admit," as Léon de Laborde wrote about the late Mughal artifacts he saw in London in 1851, "the superiority of their principles of ornamentation over the jumble of ideas by which we are governed" (Laborde 1856: vol. 1, 255–256). This was why references to contemporary Islamic ornamentation are also to be found in most of the illustrated ornament books of the time, in contrast to the medieval bias of Orientalist representations and academic scholarship: reproductions of nineteenth-century Qajar, Mughal, Ottoman, or Cairene compositions cohabit with older ones, in Jones's *Grammar of Ornament*, Bourgoin's *Les Arts arabes*, and other similar publications.

No need to insist upon the fact that, as precise as these formal analyses were, they over-emphasized the alleged Islamic prohibition of figurative representation. Islamic arts were dragged into a specifically Western struggle to free ornamental creation from iconographic constraints. Beyond that, the aim was to question the universal validity of mimesis not only by confining it to painting and sculpture but also by deconstructing its general pretension to being ontologically true (a development which must not be interpreted as a forerunner of Western modernist "abstraction," as will be shown at the end of this chapter). In France, England, or Germany, the same battle against imitative representations within ornamental frameworks was closely linked to the admiration for Islamic arts and the dismissal of the antique Greek theory of images, as Richard Redgrave, Owen Jones's colleague at the Science and Art Department of the London Museum of Ornamental Art (soon to become the South Kensington Museum), stated in 1853, "Notwithstanding all the ridiculous legends which the ignorant believes to be the gospel of art, from the Greek bird which pecked at the painted grapes, downwards, it may unhesitatingly be said that imitation, when relied upon itself, is but a very low merit in the artist" (Redgrave 1853: 15).

In 1877, the young curator of the museum of applied arts in Berlin, Julius Lessing, a renowned specialist of "Oriental" rugs, expressed the same feeling by giving a positive value to the concept of "lack of meaning" (*Bedeutungslosigkeit*) when applied to ornamental works: "For everyday use, the lack of meaning must be the rule. It reaches its pinnacle in the network of geometric lines and this is precisely what underlies all Oriental floor decorations and carpets" (Lessing 1877: 7). In numerous theories of ornament of the period (like Charles Blanc's contemporary *Grammaire des arts décoratifs* or Gottfried Semper's analyses of the art of textile), similar anti-mimetic arguments are repeated, with high regard for Islamic achievements of this nature. Ornament should no longer be seen as an image or the byproduct of pre-existing images. It could and should cast away not only any narrative propensity but any iconic status whatsoever, without being relegated to the margins of human invention for all that.

Contrary to the representational image, which splits the viewer's perception between the real space where he stands and the imagined space which he contemplates, nonfigural ornamentation promoted a merging between the perceptual and the bodily experience of an inhabited space. Users of ornamented spaces were primarily encouraged to interact in new ways with their environment and with other human beings, to produce ever-new conditions of individual and social life. An ornamental unity was thus contrasted with an iconic dualism, an aesthetic of function with an aesthetic of representation. This went beyond a strict rationalism, giving birth to peculiar sorts of pre-phenomenological vitalist reflections upon the agency of art in a modern society. Among all the nineteenth-century supporters of Islamic arts, Jules Bourgoin, in France, was certainly the one who carried such critical thinking the furthest, paradoxically based upon rigorous rationalist grounds. Internationally renowned for his brilliant logical explanation of the "grammar" of Islamic ornament, openly affiliated to the doctrine of the neo-Kantian mathematician and philosopher Antoine Augustin Cournot, he nonetheless forged the concept of an "aesthetic geometry" – later to be renamed "the Graphic" (Bourgoin 1905) – rooted in "immediate intuition" and dominating "Oriental" countries, which he opposed to the "unhealthy preoccupations of scholastic geometry and mechanical industry" in Europe (Bourgoin 1868–1873: 183). More precisely, what he admired most (and partially imagined) in the artistic realizations of Islam was their ability to integrate and make use of innumerable slight irregularities of form and material within severely regular patterns, as a materialization of the unpredictability of life animating the intangible logic of Being.

Bourgoin's obsessive speculations on mathematical decorative formulas (Figure 46.2), curiously combined with a "deep revulsion for exact sciences" (Bourgoin 1868–1873: 184) and a disgust for the West's "hateful separatism" (between the body and the mind) (Bourgoin Archives, file 67-4, INHA, Paris). This made his last books hardly understandable and estranged him from the rest of Islamic art connoisseurs or architect-decorators (Bourgoin 1899–1901; Bourgoin 1905). Nonetheless, he belonged to a larger community. We find similar though much less philosophical remarks, for instance, in Richard Redgrave's *Manual of Design* of 1876, describing the perfect artist as a combination of "designer, ornamentist and craftsman": "His hand and his mind wrought together, not only in design but in every stage of its completion … He worked, not to produce a rigid sameness, but he worked as Nature works: she produces nothing exactly similar to its fellow" (Redgrave 1876: 61) (provided that what Redgrave calls "Nature" is identified by Bourgoin as an inner life independent of the outer world). The insistence upon the vital quality of any good ornamental work also explains why Islamic art was praised for its material frugality in the first place. At the opposite extreme from lavish Orientalist representations of luxury goods, it was the almost puritanical use of poor and ephemeral materials that kindled the admiration of most of the theoreticians of ornament, who preferred to overlook the equally prominent tendency towards opulence in Islamic arts. The insistence upon portability went along with a belief in pragmatism and functionalism, shaping a visual culture turned towards subjectivity rather than objectivity, human industry rather than precious materials, social usefulness rather than vain display. This belief – as distant from reality as the Orientalist fairytale – comes to a perfectly clear formulation in Léon de Laborde's panegyric of "Oriental" arts displayed at the 1851 Great Exhibition:

> Oriental art knows how to be rich at little expense. This is the secret that we must steal from it, without being dazzled by the luxury displayed on rare occasions of magnificence. It knows how to be glittering, sumptuous, dazzling at little cost … You say it's too rich; but look, this is pure simplicity; art alone is rich and performs

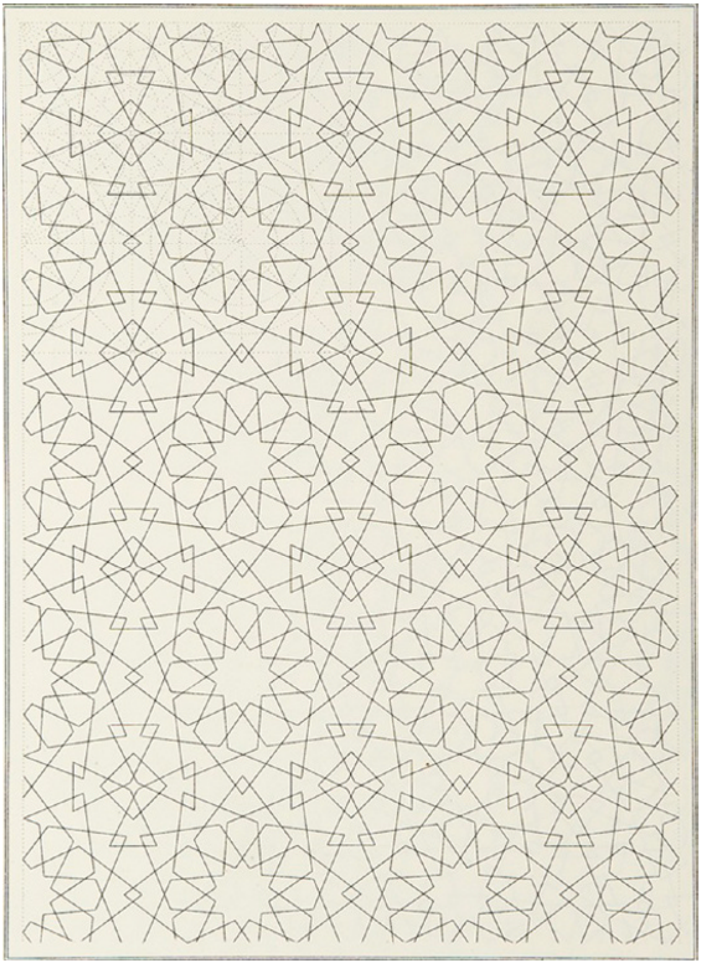


Figure 46.2 Jules Bourgoin, “Epure 71,” *Les Eléments de l’art arabe. Le trait des entrelacs*, Paris, 1879.

> everything … Our admiration does not only go to the work itself but attaches to its author as well. One senses the individual and identifies with his work; we measure the days and years required to embroider the textile, to weave the shawl, to carve the piece of wood and to engrave the ivory. (Laborde 1856: vol. 1, 254)

Islamophilia

In other contexts, words like “japonism” or “sinophilia” have been forged to isolate specific European cultural trends of the eighteenth or nineteenth century. In this case, one may speak of a kind of Western “islamophilia,” in stark contrast to the Orientalist taste. Firstly, the focus of theoretical, historical, and pragmatic discourses on Islamic arts was indeed what we still call "Islam," geographically and culturally vague though it may be. Ethnic characterizations like "Arab," "Persian," "Moorish" art, and so on, never fell out of favor completely but were increasingly challenged by the expression "Muslim art," which eventually gained currency at the end of the century. A turning point was the Parisian *Première Exposition d'art musulman* of 1893, whose title alone sparked much debate. Its curator, George Marye, also director of the new Museum of Algerian Antiquities and Muslim Art in Algiers, wrote that "it is not without opposition that this title has been accepted. Collectors have complained about an appellation which has disturbed old habits. Had a vote been organized, the widely established and narrow term 'Arab art' would probably have prevailed" (Marye 1893–1894: 490). Paul Casanova, who would later become professor of Arabic at the prestigious Collège de France, was one of the supporters of this innovation, but warned against misleading religious interpretations: "I only ask," he wrote in 1894, "for permission to remark that the words '*Muslim art*' are not explicit enough. They must be considered as an abbreviation of the expression '*Art of the Muslim Nations*', since the religious idea has left no imprint upon it, except in very few instances" (Casanova 1893: 1167).

The same year, the carpet dealer and connoisseur Vincent J. Robinson (who, impelled by William Morris's enthusiast expertise, was on the verge of selling the famous sixteenth-century Safavid "Ardabil" carpet to the South Kensington Museum) expressed the conception of an art form which – because of its purported aniconicity – had been divested of any religious meaning, unlike the European figurative arts:

> The Mohammedan, however he might be supposed to be the slave of his religion, had, in matters such as design, a temptation and a power of infinite variety of detail within the limits assigned to him by his prophet. In contrast with this, the Italian in the Middle Ages worked for the Church, in which the central and prominent figure of all design was the human. (Robinson 1893: pl. 3) [*sic*]

This paradoxically secular definition of a "Muslim" or a "Mohammedan" art form was at variance with the consensus of contemporary Orientalist sciences and philology on "the world of Islam," widely insisting upon the centrality of religion in it. In parallel, the expression "Islamic art" appeared relatively early, with more or less the same range of meanings. The engineer and archaeologist Emile Prisse d'Avennes, for instance, after long stays in Cairo (between 1827 and 1844 and again 1858 and 1860) and his publication of a monumental book using the term "Arab art" (Prisse d'Avennes 1869–1877), wrote in 1878 an unpublished "brief survey of Islamic archaeology," where he recognized that "he had gone so far as to reject the denominations of Moorish, Turkish or Arab art, and only believed now in 'Islamic art', even if this was qualified by ethnic or climatic influences, in the same way as one might speak of the Renaissance and call it 'French', 'Italian' or 'Flemish'" (Volait 2010: 101).

In the German world also, the term "Islam" was sporadically used, as in an exhibition of Egyptian objects organized by the Czech architect Franz Schmoranz in Vienna in 1876 (*Historische Ausstellung des islamischen Orients*) or in Julius Franz's *Die Baukunst des Islam* in 1887 (the author was the highly influential chief architect of the pious foundations (*awaqf*) in Cairo between 1881 and 1887), or again in the archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld's article on Mshatta and the "Genesis of Islamic Art" (Herzfeld 1910). Even before the final triumph of the expressions "Islamic arts" or "arts of Islam," the rise of the global idea of "Muslim art" echoes the desire to marginalize ethnic or religious approaches and to replace them with a purely formal definition of art, which endowed it with a potentially universal value. Only at this cost could the lesson of "Islam" be allowed to meet the secular needs of the Western European nations (in sharp contrast to the present anti-global academic desire to destroy "the myth of the unity of Islamic art" (Shalem 2012: 9)). Owen Jones is among those who expressed this strategic formalism most clearly: "All the laws of the distribution of form which we have already observed in the Arabian and Moresque ornament are equally to be found in the productions of India … The spandrel of a Moorish arch, and an Indian shawl, are constructed precisely on the same principles" (Jones 1856: 242, 246). This is why, in the illustrations of such Islamic-biased pattern books as Jones' *Grammar*, decontextualized patchworks of disembodied motifs from various origins and periods create new compositions by themselves (Figure 46.3).

A second characteristic of "islamophilia" is that its first momentum was affective. Even if it ended up in a rational analysis of forms and materials, it was first rooted in a subjective "love" (the Platonic *philia*) for its object. Friedrich Maximilian Hessemer, who was so despondent when he came back from Egypt to Frankfurt in 1831 that he saw everything in Europe as though it were contaminated by "a kind of spiritual cholera" (Bott and Eichenauer 2001: 45); Owen Jones, who was so obsessed by his early discovery of the Alhambra that he was nicknamed Alhambra Jones for the rest of his career; Jules Bourgoin, who recalled that, after his "total loss of bearings on encountering an art so different from ours and even from any other," in Cairo and Damascus, he could not but "give in to an irresistible vocation" and "abandoned any professional occupation in order to succumb entirely to his leanings" (Bourgoin Archives, file 67-1, Paris, INHA) – all of these examples characterize the emotional impetus behind these careers.

Neither this nor the focus on "Islam," however, would be sufficient to distinguish "islamophilia" from Orientalism. The discriminating factor lies elsewhere, in the kind of relationship which was developed with the desired Other. The "Orient" was an object of political control for the Orientalist conqueror, of knowledge for the Orientalist scholar, of representation for the Orientalist artist. There was little chance that a nineteenth-century Orientalist painter would become, say, a miniature painter or an ornament maker just because he was attracted by these new cultural environments. On the contrary, Orientalist representations globally strengthened the legitimacy of academic mimesis by

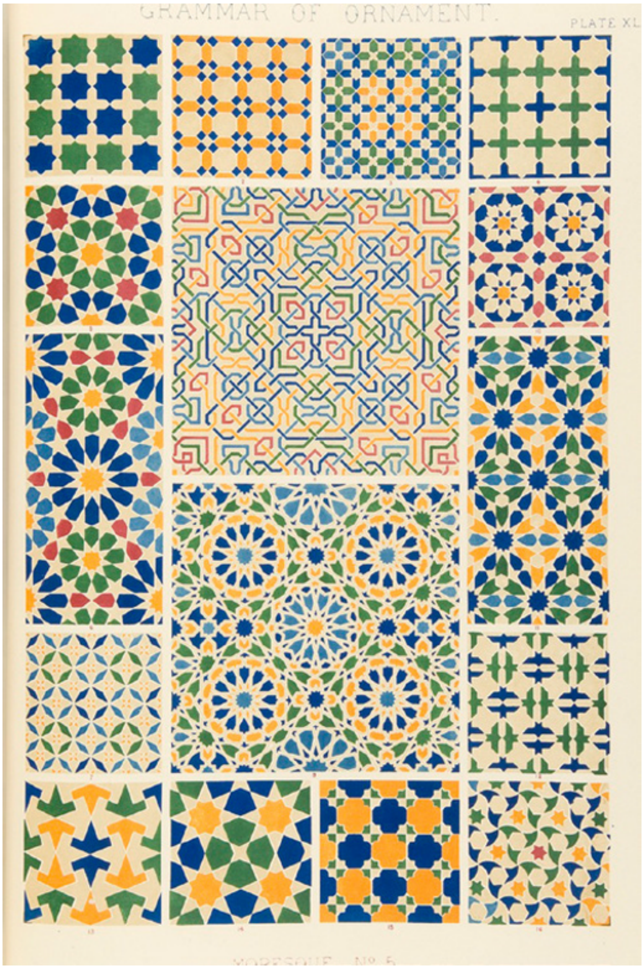

GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT.
PLATE XL
MORESQUE Nº 5.

Figure 46.3 Owen Jones, “Moresque no. 5,” *The Grammar of Ornament*, London, 1856, Plate XLIII.

their narrative quality and their ever-more detailed depictions of landscapes, people, and artworks. Similarly, an Orientalist scholar did not delve into the study of “Oriental” languages, literatures, or thoughts with the desire to turn Western logic and knowledge upside down. On the contrary, in the second half of the century, when Romantic speculations about the Orient were waning in intensity, the Orientalist sciences became a major proving ground for positivism and rationalism. Conversely, the explicit goal of an “islamophile” architect or theoretician of ornament was to be transformed by contact with another mode of vision and creation. He did not only want to learn about Islam, but also to learn *from* Islam. Islamic arts were not only a passive object of observation, but an active model, providing lessons beyond a mere stylistic transformation within the same aesthetic system. What was at stake was a complete redefinition of the role of artistic forms in the relationship between people and their living environments.

There can be no doubt that the "Islam," which was celebrated as a model was a partially reconstructed reality; besides, the final goal was to obliterate it by founding a global modern (i.e., Western-dominated) visual culture. As Léon de Laborde wrote somewhat cynically,

> The Orient is no longer the Orient. While it still exists, let us admire it … and form collections of its products which we will use as models … People from the Orient will come to Paris. Hopefully, they will find in our museums the art which we will have killed in their hands and which will have thrived in ours. (Laborde 1856: vol. 1, 268)

Nonetheless, as cynical and pessimistic as it was about the future of Islamic cultures, this attitude remained motivated by the quest for a self-metamorphosis in contact with another vision. Let us then call "islamophilia" the attitude by means of which, in the context of industrial Western culture, a formative dialogue was engaged with visual cultures marked by what we still call "Islam," with little or no reference to its religious dimension. An affective desire of identification with the Other was the starting point for such a dialogue, but its end was the Western foundation of a new universal culture.

"Islamophilia" diverges from Orientalism by promoting nonfigural ornaments against mimetic images, a musical and geometrical model against a discursive and literary one, material poverty of means against luxury, practicality against fantasy, the present against the past, the internalization of the message against the distant examination of it, and, to put it briefly, universality against Otherness. Of course, such an antagonism, though clearly formulated by many supporters of an Islamic ornamental model at the time, did not exclude mixed practices of all sorts. While some Orientalist painters showed a destabilizing attraction for pure ornamentalism (think of the Catalan Mariano Fortuny passionately dedicating himself to the collecting of Nasrid artifacts from al-Andalus in the early 1870s and celebrating them in his minute watercolors), many decorators came close to Orientalist pastiches and fancy imitations in their productions, even if the ornamental books they used promoted non-imitative procedures of creation.

It is in fact somewhat paradoxical that the defense of an exotic and chiefly historical model – namely Islamic ornamentation – was meant to save the Western artist from the plague of historicist copyism. This proposition can only be understood if it is connected to the specific perception of the Islamic legacy in Europe. Islamic arts could not be equated with other non-Western arts such as those of Africa or the Far East. On the contrary, like the arts of the Western world, they were identified as Mediterranean heirs of the Greco-Roman tradition. Sharing the same heritage, the two traditions had diverged, however, in their respective uses of it. While the "Arabs" had developed a creative reading of this treasure of forms to shape new visual harmonies, the West had identified itself entirely with them and, from the Renaissance on, had set out to revive them. In the opinion of the "islamophile" reformers, the utopian dimension of this European dream of a new-born antiquity could only lead to melancholy and repetition, while the pragmatic handling of the same reference in the Muslim world had paved the way for a future in which antiquity was as internally active as it was externally unrecognizable.

This is what Owen Jones formulated in the wake of the Great Exhibition:

> The Arabs … did not, as we should have done, continue to copy and reproduce the models which were at first so convenient to them; but, applying to them their own peculiar feelings, they gradually departed from the original model, to such an extent at last, that but for the intermediate steps we should be unable to discover the least analogy between them. (Jones 1853: 295)

The same idea has been expressed in numerous other instances, among them the concluding sentence of the anonymous introduction to the catalogue of the great *Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst* (Exhibition of Masterpieces of Muhammedan Art) in Munich in 1910 (which echoes the formal and historical analyses of the "arabesque" by the Viennese art historian Alois Riegl in his *Stilfragen* of 1893): "We consider the arabesque to be the specific Muhammadan ornament, which must be seen as a refined continuation and intelligent unravelling of the leaf tendril of antiquity. In its two most perfect forms, the Persian and the Moorish, it is the supreme expression of an abstract sense of beauty" (Sarre and Martin 1910: 53).

Just as the Arabs had assimilated Greco-Roman decorations in order to invent the arabesque, the modern designers had to assimilate the arabesque in order to invent new formal systems: in short, modernity should do with Islamic arts what Islamic arts had done with antiquity. The latter was increasingly seen as a kind of castrating master, preventing Europe from creating its own mode of creation. As a remedy, the old Romantic concept of an "Oriental Renaissance" – originally confined to philosophy and poetry and based upon a dialogue with ancient India – was extended to Islam and applied to the visual arts in the second half of the century. This also signified a radical transformation of the idea of a Renaissance, detached from the oedipal link that characterized the relationship between Europe and Greco-Roman antiquity. The European ambivalence towards Islam as a whole no doubt played a role in this shift. Islam was a liberating model because it was also a weak model: it was unable to acquire a fatherly status as regards the West (like ancient Greece or Rome did); even more, as a global culture, it appeared doomed, if not annihilated, by modernity.

Modernism

It would be stretching the point to establish a direct connection between the use of Islamic arts in nineteenth-century theories of ornament and the same reference in the context of early twentieth-century avant-garde painting. Just as it would overstate the case to suggest that the disappearance of explicit Islamic references in modernist design was a consequence of the universalist interpretation favored by nineteenth-century reformers, as if, once the goal of an ornamental Renaissance had been reached, any hint of Islamic particularism would have appeared at once too exotic and too literal and therefore out of place. Suffice it to say that, in the 1910s, the use of Islamic models declined significantly in the most innovative experiments in design and that, conversely, it became central to the work of a few influential painters engaged in a radical critique of representation, and to whom academic Orientalism was an object of contempt. This did not necessarily point to abstraction. The meaning of this last term differs from one period or context to another, and its use in some ornament books of the nineteenth century, with regard to Islamic patterns, cannot simply be equated to what was made of it in avant-garde painting. As a matter of fact, highly "islamophile" painters like Henri Matisse (d. 1954) or Paul Klee (d. 1940) always distanced themselves from strictly non-figurative painting, while the founding fathers of "abstraction" such as Wassily Kandinsky (d. 1944), Kazimir Malevich (d. 1935), or Piet Mondrian (d. 1944) were either suspicious or silent as regards Islamic arts.

This is particularly striking in Kandinsky's case, as he was in Munich in 1910 and therefore in the right place to appreciate the full scope of Islamic artistic expression at the exhibition of *Masterworks of Mohammedan Art*. At this exhibition, an exceptional series of carpets helped the young Franz Marc to understand Kandinsky's art. He writes,

> It is a shame that it is not possible to hang Kandinsky's wonderful compositions and certain other works next to the Muhammadan carpets in the rooms of the exhibition. Comparisons would become inevitable and how instructive that would be for all of us! What is the nature of the astonished admiration with which we behold this Oriental art? Does it not mockingly reveal to us the one-sided limitations of our European concepts of painting? Its mastery of colors and composition, a thousand times more profound than our own, casts shame upon our conventional theories. In Germany there is scarcely any decorative work, let alone a carpet, which we could hang next to this art. Let us attempt this with Kandinsky's compositions – they will hold their own in this risky exercise, not as carpets but as "*images*" (Marc 1910: 219).

In these last words, Marc thus reaffirmed the superiority of Western pictorial art over that of Islamic carpets. Loyal to the notion of "high art" taking precedence over the "minor arts," he dreamt of Kandinsky's "compositions" transposing the formal lessons of Islamic decorative style into fully fledged "images" endowed with greater meaning. For the same reason, Kandinsky himself repeated that he found the notion of the "decorative" repellent. After having carefully sketched Islamic architectural and ornamental motifs in Tunisia in 1905, he sought above all to draw a distinction between non-figurative "high art" and simple decoration, struggling to combat "the danger of ornamental form," as his complex thinking on abstraction and the spiritual in art grew to maturity (Kandinsky 1913: 110). As a consequence, from 1910 on, his rare references to Islamic art relate to figurative works, like Persian manuscript paintings or the folklore figures of the Egyptian shadow theatre.

No doubt that in other cases, the Islamic arts played their part in the development of Western abstraction: let us think of Frantisek Kupka, who read Albert Gayet's *L'Art arabe* of 1893 and wrote in 1910 that "Arab art is a world higher than our … the rhythmic song of the soul" (Grabar and Pierre 2005: 11), shortly before he painted his first non-figurative compositions. Even if this reference never ceased to be sporadically active in twentieth-century Western non-figurative painting, the use of Islamic arts was less fundamental to the rise of modernist abstraction than it was to the blurring of boundaries between figurative and non-figurative forms. It is as if the ontological Platonic interpretation of Islamic ornaments was not as influential as a phenomenological approach, experimenting and reflecting upon a new, decorative relationship to artistic forms, figurative or not, in a living space.

This becomes obvious if we refer to Matisse. Whereas Marc and Kandinsky tried to establish a contemplative vision as the only legitimate source of meaning in art, Matisse sought to translate the peripheral vision implied by carpets or other Islamic artifacts into his work and to establish a visual approach that he dubbed "decorative" at the heart of the Western image. In the famous "symphonic interior," as Alfred Barr calls it, entitled *The Red Studio* of January 1912, for instance, a black and yellow band of Ottoman velvet at the center of the composition is hardly recognizable as such (we know what it is only through Matisse's written explanation) (Duthuit *et al.* 1997: 364). This decorative fragment is put on the same level as Matisse's own works represented in the painting and speaks for the efficiency of a universal decorativeness which is at once orchestrated and reflected in the painting. In short, the "confirmation" (Matisse 1947: 178) Matisse found in Islamic arts (to use his own word) was not ontological in nature (relating to the image's ability to give an account of the structure of Being) but instead phenomenological (pertaining to the image's ability to give life to the space of perception). The work of art did not aim to captivate but to liberate the being-in-the-world of the spectator, not absorbing the viewer by adopting a centripetal logic (something that an abstract painter like Kandinsky would have approved of) but instead referring the viewer back to real space, in keeping with a centrifugal logic, and endowing this living space with new energy. There is no room here to detail Matisse's life-long relationship with Islamic arts, his many statements acknowledging his debt towards them, his early connections with a network of Islamic art collectors and admirers, his trips to Munich in October 1910 and Andalusia in 1911 (more important as regards Islamic arts than the fortnight he spent in Algeria in 1906 or his two stays in Tangiers in 1912–1913), and of course the numerous works in which, by various means, he pays a tribute to the significance of Islamic arts for him (Duthuit *et al.* 1997). What must be underlined, however, is that this aesthetic could not permeate his work before the artist had freed himself from what can be called the anxiety of Orientalism. His 1906 trip to Algeria, where he almost did not paint, served this purpose; from then on, he knew for certain that the representation of an imaginary Orient was alien to his nature, so much so that his theatrical "Odalisques" of the 1920s must be seen as a regressive despondency, in the context of the postwar "retour à l'ordre" (return to order), even if the best of them display a complex, somehow dialectical quality. Conversely, in his programmatic works of the 1910s as in his late paper cut-outs of the 1940s, several traits are, consciously or not, attuned to the "islamophile" conception of Islamic arts. In the pinned-up sheets used in his cut-outs, for instance, suffused as they are with the lessons of the Alhambra, the obliteration of any recognizable exotic reference is striking, as is the tribute to an ephemeral, anti-materialist quality in the work of art.

Another revelatory case is Paul Klee's. Throughout his life he underscored the vital significance of his Tunisian trip and, more specifically, of his visit to Qayrawan in April 1914 (Baumgartner 2014). Qayrawan was not only an exotic destination (the town looked rather dull and unfriendly in the opinion of many Orientalist painters); first and foremost, it housed many pre-eminent Islamic monuments, among which the ninth-century Aghlabid mosque of Sidi 'Uqba was visited first by Klee and his friends on the 16th of April. From then on, the artist decided he had definitely become "a painter" and he did his best to convince his public of his "Oriental" origins, constructing a personal myth with a typically Orientalist resonance, particularly pervasive in the first books published on him in 1920–1921 (Hausenstein 1921). However, this narrative dream of the Orient as a "native soil" (*Heimat*) (Klee 1988: 350) was counterbalanced by a life-long interest in "pure" decorativeness, which reached its peak during a visit to Qayrawan's mosques. This led to the fundamentally dialectical nature of Klee's images, in which abstract forms seem on the brink of being inhabited by or being transformed into imaginary bodies and, conversely, a rigorous ornamental grammar deconstructs this nascent fiction and substitutes for them constellations of disembodied motifs. Most noticeably in the Bauhaus period (1921–1931), paintings with telling titles like *Structural* (Figure 46.4) or *Gate of a Mosque* seem to float between the realm of ornament and the realm of dream. In the former, the unmistakable motif of Qayrawan domes is obsessively repeated; they are rhythmic entities as well as cryptic signs of a personal secret. In these complex compositions, the Western vision

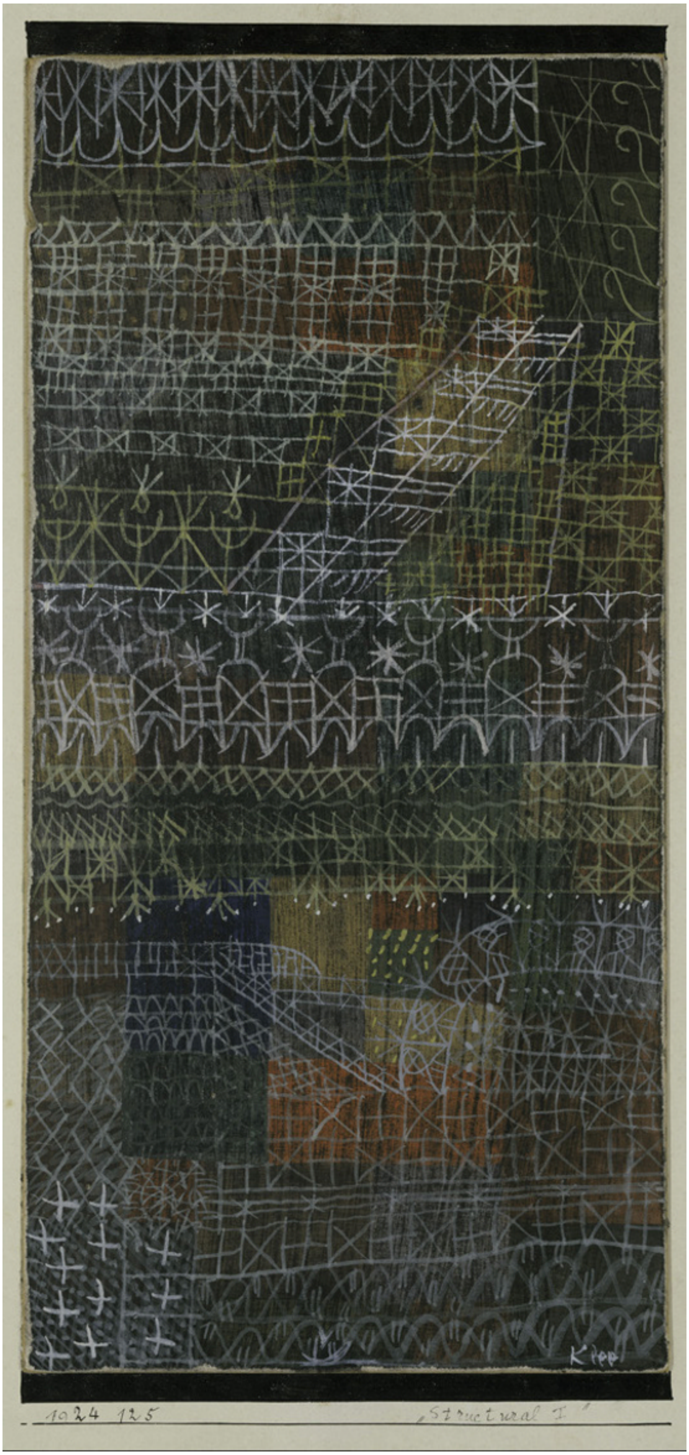

Klee
1924 125
Structural I

FIGURE 46.4 Paul Klee, *Structural I*, 1924, gouache on paper, 28.6 × 14 cm, New York. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

explores its own uncertainties, typified by trembling lines and the color patches overflowing their contours, as if the dialectics of image and ornament were too deeply rooted in the artist's mind to allow a stable definition of art anymore.

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Part VIII

Islam, Art, and the Contemporary (1950–Present)

The wealth of information on contemporary developments is just beginning to be collected, catalogued, and studied. The richness of this emerging field of study certainly requires fuller and more comprehensive treatment than is possible here. The topics selectively touched upon in the present section are therefore intended to draw attention to possible future directions for serious interpretative research, going beyond mere journalistic reportage or art criticism. As indicated in our introductory essay, we feel that artistic and architectural production after the 1950s can legitimately be claimed by both Islamic art historians and international specialists of contemporary art/architecture. However, regions falling into the purview of the field of Islamic art and architecture are rarely included in mainstream surveys and journals on the modern and contemporary periods, just as the exclusion of those periods from publications in the Islamic field hinders their study from an equally fruitful art historical perspective. We recognize the contentiousness of labeling such works as "Islamic," but whatever the preferred label, the deliberate cross-referencing of traditional forms or media by contemporary artists and architects inevitably links their works to a richly layered historical past.

Despite the resistance among some specialists to a broadening of scope in the field of Islamic art and architecture, the appeal of contemporary subjects is inevitable. Hence, cultivating the rising interest in modern-contemporary art, whether it is classified as Islamic or not, carries the potential to provide fresh new perspectives on the nature of modernity, center-versus-periphery, the global, and the local. The temporal boundaries of the Islamic field have in practice, though to a much lesser degree in interpretative studies, already expanded into the realm of the contemporary. Practitioners have enthusiastically embraced new media ranging from film,

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video art, computer-generated design, and conceptual art, to the latest trends through participation in international biennial exhibitions that emerged as a paradigm for a globalized art world, as well as a major boost to local tourism industries, in such cities as Istanbul, Cairo, Beirut, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi.

Novel institutional frameworks for the production, exhibition, and consumption of contemporary art/architecture have unsurprisingly shaped its directions and discourses. The extraordinary variety of approaches in the arts and architecture can be said to have largely centered on the global–local (glocal) dialectic. Following international modernism and postmodernism, twenty-first-century globalism has emerged as a dominant force in artistic and architectural culture, and in cultural heritage politics. In architecture, that force extends from the vernacular and monumental to grandiose urban "development" projects, and also informs the escalating preoccupation with landscape, ecology, water resources, and energy preservation around the world. Each nation state with a legacy of Islamic art and architecture has produced its own complex genealogies of modern and contemporary art, despite some prevailing common denominators such as reinterpretations of calligraphy and abstraction, ornamental arabesques, and manuscript painting conventions. These shared themes have recently been complemented by messages of political activism and feminist commentaries on the status of women and the veil. In architecture, stereotypical cross-referencing of Islamic tradition, with eclectic quotations, outright copying, or subtler emulations of underlying principles, has been counterbalanced by internationalist preferences associated with modernity-contemporaneity or Westernization. It would be premature if not impossible to present a historical overview here, given the bewildering diversity of artistic practices from the second half of the twentieth century onward and the expanded range of multinational artists/architects now including women, whether native or foreign, based in the region's new nation states and in international locales.

This section begins with Heghnar Z. Watenpaugh's chapter, which critically analyzes the recent historiography on the category of "Islamic art and architecture," complemented by her personal perspectives on current and emerging tendencies. She addresses the "resonance" of this category from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century, its circulation in debates among art and architectural historians, artists and architects, as well as museum curators and gallery professionals. Pointing out the manifold problems raised by "Islamic" as a bounded category, she notes that specialists in this field have privileged Islam over other artistic traditions in the region, with which there was a fluid interaction, such as those of Jewish and Christian communities.

Kishwar Rizvi traces the histories of architecture and nation building in the contemporary Middle East, with a special focus on Dubai and its paradigmatic relation to other places in the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon. Selected projects in Dubai are interpreted as instances of the construction of an idealized past, while at the same time projecting a utopian future: an architectural modernism designed for the new millennium. The aim to transcend geographical–national boundaries while simultaneously drawing upon indigenous traditions thus engages with contemporary discourses in architectural history and practice, which aspire to counterbalance localism with globalism. Rizvi observes that, ironically, the status of the region of the Emirates as a former province of the Ottoman empire until the nineteenth century is bypassed in silence, in favor of projecting an imagined indigenous past, "the seemingly timeless images of dhows and camels."

The article of Esra Akcan interprets translations of architecture in West Asia during the twentieth century, criticizing the widespread conception that treats modern architectures around the world as derivatives of Western modernism, a conception that fails to come to terms with the global dimensions of modernity. Underlining the limits of art historical categories, including "Islamic art and architecture," she contends that translation theory more effectively "allows for a historiography of the global." The chapter focuses on dialogues between "foreign" architects, foreign-educated nationals, and the citizenry that collaboratively shaped examples of translational modern architecture in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and some Gulf States. This phenomenon, in turn, raises the necessity for more dialogue between studies on several parts of the world, so as to rethink geographical–religious categories based on the assumption that the globe is divided into self-contained cultures with allegedly pure "local" or pure "global" architectures.

The last two chapters turn from architecture to modern and contemporary art. Iftikhar Dadi interprets the political contexts of the development of calligraphic modernism between 1945 and 1975 in the Sudan, Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq, where pioneering artists with a European-inflected training formulated an innovative aesthetic language of calligraphic figuration and abstraction. Linking this phenomenon with the "nationalist modern" project embraced by artists from the Islamic world, who in the mid-twentieth century were engaged with comparable cultural issues in the wake of decolonization, the author observes that its end was spelled by contemporary globalization, which largely obliterated the promises of the postcolonial nation state. Dadi concludes that the modernist artworks of artists from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, who pioneered calligraphic modes of expression in abstract art, were potent sites of tension between the "national" and the "universal-Islamic": while remaining in dialogue with international metropolitan developments, they simultaneously articulated regional and nationalist specificities.

The argument made by Dadi resonates with and complements that of the last chapter in this volume, in terms of the complex analysis of the ways in which the politics of the modern and contemporary are being configured currently. Anneka Lenssen and Sarah A. Rogers's chapter presents a sophisticated inquiry into the articulation of the contemporary. As the authors provocatively argue, "To engage with contemporary art from the perspective of any one of the art historical subfields rooted in non-contemporary forms of production and patronage is to encounter acute methodological challenges." They examine globalized art world developments in Arab countries, asking whether the contemporary is “a period, a set of artistic strategies, or an aesthetic that results from a specific set of socio-political conditions.” This chapter highlights the prominent role since the 1990s of new institutional infrastructures integrated with transnational markets of the global art world, particularly in oil-rich regions fully embedded in the economy of global capitalism (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, and Qatar). It connects the boom in museums, galleries, biennial exhibitions, and auctions of contemporary art to a contentious complicity with the politics of globalization and consumerism, thereby signaling the frailties of the nation-state.

47

Resonance and Circulation: The Category “Islamic Art and Architecture”

Heghnar Z. Watenpaugh

This chapter addresses the resonance of the category “Islamic art and architecture” from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century, and its circulation in debates among art and architectural historians, artists, and architects, as well as museum curators and gallery professionals. “Resonance” evokes multiple movements, oscillation, amplification, and even distortion. Stephen Greenblatt (1991: 42) emphasizes “resonance” as a mode of experience for the viewer of an exhibited object, as “the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged.” For Greenblatt, resonance was always historically situated and linked to circulation, when an object became meaningful through social circulation. “Resonance” shifts the discussion from singular interventions, such as the publication of texts or staging of exhibitions, towards broader encounters or exchanges instead. It helps conceptualize the trajectory of the term “Islamic art,” not as a continuous linear evolution but rather as a discontinuous series of circulation loops where historical actors seize upon the term and incorporate it into their texts, performances, or projects, with variable degrees of authority, power, or influence.

Definitions and Boundaries

“Islamic art and architecture” appears more vital, relevant, and marketable than ever. In addition to a robust presence in academia, the category has gained visibility through recent mass-market surveys, whose remarkably consistent narrative

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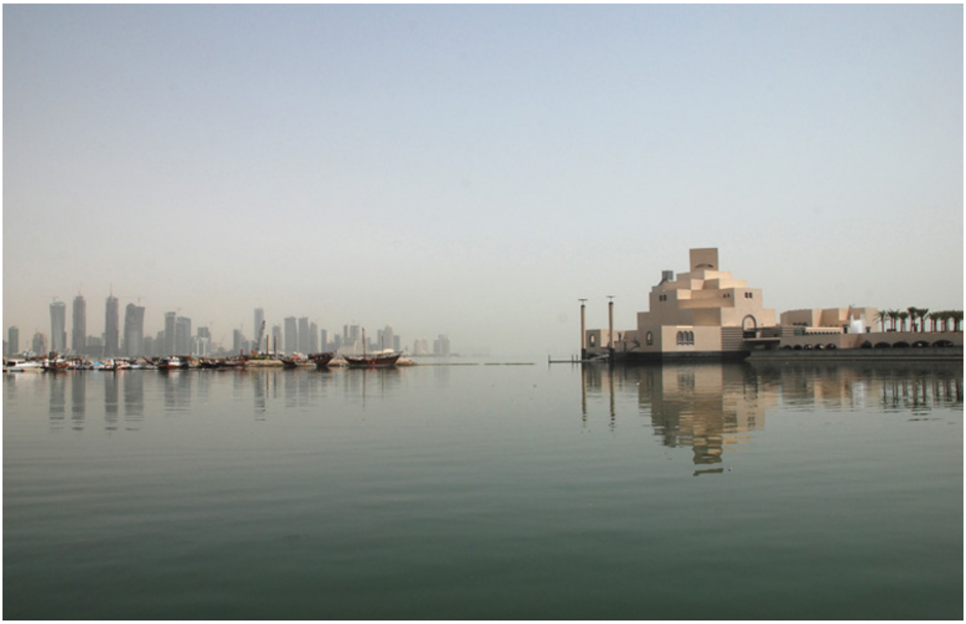

Figure 47.1 I.M. Pei (Pei Cobb Freed & Partners). Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, 2008. Source: Anne de Henning/Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Reproduced with permission.

(Flood 2007: 32) codified the field's canon. The public can view Islamic art worldwide, at new institutions such as the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha (Figure 47.1), and established museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Louvre in Paris. Works of Islamic art fetch ever-higher prices, even in previously neglected subfields such as Middle Eastern modern and contemporary art, which sit uneasily under the rubric of Islamic art (see Lenssen and Rogers, chapter 51). Architectural activity extends from venerable Istanbul to pioneering developments in the Gulf. Historic preservation projects have revitalized ancient centers, like al-Azhar Park in Cairo. Interest surrounds the work of contemporary artists who hail from or claim a link to the Middle East or the Islamic world. Contemporary artists and curators present their work on the global stage, including emerging hubs such as the Istanbul and Sharjah Biennales. Each of these developments has a profound impact on and is shaped by the art and real estate markets.

A debate accompanies this contemporary vitality, questioning how the rubric Islamic art is delimited, and who wields the power to determine it (Blair and Bloom 2003; Flood 2007; Rabbat 2012b; Shaw 2012). What seems to be at stake is nothing less than "canonical anxieties, reflecting a concern to protect and control the field's all-embracing framework" (Necipoğlu 2012: 62), along with calls to rethink its parameters (see Flood and Necipoğlu, chapter 1).

Periodization depends on art history's own complex and evolving historiography. As art history's disciplinary gaze constructed space and time in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it codified the category Islamic. The general survey structures its categories so as to exclude Islamic art from the mainstream of art history, reflecting a pattern through which non-Western history is marginalized within a comprehensive, linear, and teleological taxonomy that structures the narrative of history writ large.

Thus, the survey considers Islamic art as a bounded category, visually recognizable as distinct and cohesive. Among its enduring tropes is the notion of Islamic art as being located in the past, authentic, pure, and not hybrid (Flood 2007: 36–37). "Unity in diversity" explains the variety of the field's material culture and its sheer size, anachronistically homogenizing the temporally and geographically diverse arts of the Islamic world (Necipoğlu 2012: 63; Shaw 2012). The category assumes that the arts termed "Islamic" possess a visually recognizable cohesion, somehow related to the religion of Islam.

With its homogenizing, flattening effect, "Islamic art" is hardly a neutral term. Its reception is multifaceted among those who write about it, organize exhibitions, or self-describe as practitioners of Islamic art. From its origins in dilettantism or connoisseurship, Islamic art emerged as a more professionalized, specialized field of study (Necipoğlu 2012). However, even as narratives became more scholarly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, they may not have shed their "baggage" of nineteenth-century assumptions on cultural hierarchies (Upton 2009: 461).

The Plot of Islamic Art History

In any classification system, a given category relates to others. Within art history, Islamic art may resemble the religious categories of "Early Christian" or "Buddhist" art, but the space and time of "Islamic" are out of proportion to others. Islamic art history may bear greater resemblance to a macro construct like Western art (Necipoğlu 2012: 64). Furthermore, Islamic art's boundaries have tended to grow, acquiring regions like Indonesia and Central Asia, long considered "peripheries," as well as the art of Muslim diasporas. The temporal boundaries of Islamic art have pushed towards expansion into the modern era, despite resistance. Newer media have also entered into consideration: photography, film, vernacular architecture. Thus, the time and space of Islamic art and architecture has extended. The field could even be in danger of becoming a map of Borges: a map so large and unwieldy that it becomes one and the same with the territory it depicts. Yet these expansions have remained uneven.

Throughout, Islamic art history's "plot" has maintained a remarkable consistency. It traces a progression from an original formation and dynasties with a geographic focus on the Arab Middle East and Iberia, with a major rupture in the mid-thirteenth century with the advent of the Mongols, and the subsequent emphasis on Iran and Central Asia. This periodization has been critiqued (Necipoğlu 2012: 65–67; Shaw 2012: 29). The plot locates Islamic art's greatest achievements in the medieval past, excluding the modern era from consideration

(Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu 2007; Watenpaugh 2007). The enduring trope of the "end" of Islamic art coincides with Western colonialism in the past and geopolitical exigencies in the present. The ostensible "death" of Islamic art around 1800 also coincided with its disciplinary study (Flood 2007: 34).

The counterpart of the purported "death" of Islamic art is its birth, located in the rise of Islam in seventh-century Arabia. Pinpointing a tradition's origin constructs it as distinct from previous eras. A paradigm of rupture dominated many representations of the field's beginnings, particularly popular discussions, competing with a paradigm of continuity. The title of Oleg Grabar's influential book *The Formation of Islamic Art* (Grabar 1973) captures the rise of Islam as leading to a new visual tradition, recognizably distinct from previous and contemporary styles. Grabar's work was sensitive to the continuities in construction technology, building forms, ornamental vocabularies, and the choice of sites. Nevertheless, conceptualizing antecedents postulates a watershed that cleaves a "before" and an "after." Perhaps in recognition of this, alongside the paradigm of rupture, in recent years there has been a tendency to include the art of the Umayyad caliphate (661–750) in an extended late antiquity (Bierman 1998; Flood 2012; Kennedy 1985; Necipoğlu 2008).

Having heralded "Islamic" as a bounded category, art history privileges it over other concurrent artistic traditions in the region, that are thereby rendered minor, or fall off the map altogether, such as those of Jewish and Christian communities of the eastern Mediterranean. In this paradigm, if the rise of Islam marks the beginning of Islamic art, then the category's genesis is tied to Revelation, God's message to humanity through the Prophet, to the dawn of Islam as a religion. Debates and representations of the origins of Islamic art thus prompt questions about its relationship to the religion of Islam.

Islam-as-Religion versus Islam-as-Culture

The category "Islamic art history" hinges on a religious definition, yet its relationship to the religion of Islam is ambiguous. The term "Islamic" became widespread among English-language writers only after World War I. Previously, sectarian, regional, or ethnic terms designated the same corpus, with little consistency. Nineteenth-century writers in French tended to link visual production to ethnic identity. For instance, they termed the post-Muslim-conquest architecture in Egypt "Arab" (Bierman 2005: 13–14), reserving the locutions "Persian art" and "Turkish art" for other regions. Nevertheless, this discourse was not entirely secular, as it cast Islam along with climate and race in an essential and determinant role in "Arab art." The French architect Prisse d'Avennes (d. 1879) described the architecture of Cairo as "engendered by the Koran" (Prisse d'Avennes 1877: 1; Watenpaugh 2007). However, "art musulman" was used at the Louvre in 1875 (Shaw 2012: 14).

By contrast, a conviction that visual forms expressed their makers' religion led nineteenth-century British writers to favor "Muhammedan," a term crafted for Indo-Islamic art and architecture. The English architectural historian James Fergusson (d. 1886) used religious designations to categorize Indian architecture (Fergusson 1876). While "Muhammedan," and its equivalent "Saracenic" were Fergusson's primary terms, he layered them with racial definitions. Thus the art of the "Semitic" Arab caliphs fell short of the achievements of sovereigns of the Turkic "Turanian race" dominant among the rulers of India (Fergusson 1876: vol. 2, 187–189). Fergusson supplemented these categories with additional regional, ethnic, or dynastic designations. The Anglophone and Francophone genealogies of the relevant terminology thus appear linked with the colonial delimitation of boundaries.

Germanophone scholars' engagement with Islamic art also took place within asymmetrical power relationships. They were among the first to adopt the term "Islam" in relation to the arts and architecture of the Islamic lands in the 1880s. They also proposed competing narratives of the emergence of Western art that instrumentalized late antique and early medieval "Oriental" (Grigor 2007) or "Islamic Oriental" (*islamischen Orients*) art.[1] The curators and archaeologists associated with what is today the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin's Pergamon Museum privileged early medieval Islamic art's connection to the late antique, exemplified with finds like the façade of the eighth-century Islamic palace at Mshatta in Jordan, gifted to the Kaiser by the Ottoman sultan (Hagedorn 2000; Necipoğlu 2012: 67–71). The 1910 Munich Exhibition of "Muhammedanischer Kunst" innovated in exhibiting objects with little context, inviting their aesthetic contemplation (Shalem and Lerner 2010; Shaw 2012: 18–19).

Western forms of knowledge were not a European monopoly, rather they circulated among Middle Eastern elites who appropriated Western narratives, adapting them to their own imperatives (Bahrani *et al.* 2011). The term "Fine Islamic Arts," used in 1889 to designate the new Ottoman Imperial Museum in Istanbul, may have been an appropriation of "Muhammadan art" (Shaw 2012: 13). It is notable, however, that the earliest use of the term "Islamic" appeared in a trilingual (Turkish, French, German) treatise on Ottoman architecture, commissioned by Sultan Abdülaziz for the 1873 International Exhibition in Vienna, even before publications in German began to deploy this rubric in the 1880s (Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu 2007: 6, n.15). Personalities like the late Ottoman archaeologist and painter Osman Hamdi (d. 1910) in Istanbul and the reformist politician ʿAli Mubarak (d. 1893) in Cairo dominated the administration of patrimony in the late nineteenth century. Mubarak was "an intellectual of transnational inclination who used the West to interrogate the East, and vice versa" (AlSayyad *et al.* 2005: 51).

While slippages, conflations, and appropriations continued, by the interwar period, "Islamic art" became predominant. Scholars have repeatedly noted the "unwieldy" nature of Islamic art history as a field, as well as its ambiguous relationship with Islam (Blair and Bloom 2003: 152–153). Despite being ostensibly a religious category, "Islamic" has not been limited to works of exclusively religious nature. Instead, "Islamic art" is often defined as the visual culture of any society where Muslims were or are dominant, as well as the material culture made by or for Muslim groups in societies where they constituted minorities. In scholarly usage, "Islamic" implicitly designates Islam as a metaphor for culture rather than as a religion. Nevertheless, both Islam-as-culture and Islam-as-religion suggest "Islam" as stable and monolithic.

Arguably, Islam-as-culture and Islam-as-religion constitute the two poles of Islamic art's historiography. Some have emphasized religion's agency in producing art or in rendering it meaningful, while others have minimized it, going as far as arguing that Islamic art has no religious content. Most interpreters fall between these two positions. However, neither pole represents a neutral or casual choice. As a subfield of art history, Islamic art history's disciplinary gaze has been essentially secular. It brings a modern sensibility to the study of material culture, viewing it from outside, espousing the privileged viewer's vantage, rather than the believer's, or member of the transhistorical, universal community of Muslims as understood from within the faith (the *umma*). A dialectic between religion and art has long preoccupied art historians (Preziosi 2013), and Islamic art history in particular has generally de-emphasized religion's agency in the production and reception of objects (Shaw 2012: 22–23). An inability to fully historicize religion and piety has coexisted with the tendency to broadly overemphasize religion's role in non-Western societies. When "Islam" was foregrounded as an active shaper of cities or objects, however, it was accompanied by the implicit or explicit assumption that non-Western societies, being less advanced, were prone to domination by irrational forces, such as religion. By implied contrast, Western societies were driven by rationality rather than religion, which they relegated to the past or to the private realm. Western society, being modern, was able to compartmentalize the traditional aspects of religion, and place a premium on individual freedom (Watenpaugh 2007). Furthermore, the assumption that non-Western societies restrict creative freedom results in the substitution of religion itself for the artist as art's creative agent. As one scholar put it, "Islamic architecture was seen as a tradition whose agency was collective and in which creativity in design was rarely assigned" (Rabbat 2012a: 13). It is telling, if somewhat paradoxical, that the emphasis on Islam as a shaper of visual culture in this discourse is itself a product of a secular outlook.

Texts are not isolated, rather they participate in the circulation of ideas. The arguments of nineteenth-century Orientalist interpreters and contemporary advocates of revivalist Islam feature convergences: "Both of these apparently disparate schools of thought have in fact favored religion as origin over religion as practice, explicitly denigrating variants of practice such as Sufism … redefining the arts as part of cultural production rather than religious practice" (Shaw 2012: 22–23).

Religion's agency resonates in the work of writers who self-consciously and explicitly espouse the believer's position. Such interventions include the *World of*

Islam Festival in 1976, which presented Islamic art to a broad public in London (Burckhardt 1976; Jones and Michell 1976; Lenssen 2008; Necipoğlu 2012: 63), and the "mystical or Sufi school" of scholarship, discussed further below (Ardalan and Bakhtiar 1973; Nasr 1987). Claiming to represent or interpret Islamic art in a Western context from "an Islamic perspective," these interventions espoused an ahistorical approach that privileged the formal aspects of art, and treated religion in essentialist terms. Their common features can be critiqued on three points. First, the believer's viewpoint they purportedly represented was understood as absolute and authentic. One could counter that such an absolute position cannot be sustained; whether one defines oneself as a believer or not, one is always historically situated: "the faith – which like all ideologies, often erases its own historicity and specificity in the projection of absolute doctrinal truth" (Shaw 2012: 30). Second, they privileged art's formal aspects. Third, they asserted a mystical sensibility, presenting "a timeless, anti-historicist Islam," essentialized as "unitary" and monolithic, and located in a vaguely defined pre-modernity, divorced from any historical context (Shaw 2012: 29).[2]

The proponents of the "mystical school" were not art historians. Of its main representatives, both of them Iranian, Nader Ardalan is an architect, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr is a philosopher (Ardalan 1980; Ardalan and Bakhtiar 1973; Nasr 1987). Dismissed by academics, the "mystical school" nonetheless found a receptive audience. Its approaches to Islamic art, including the emphasis on formal properties to the detriment of historical context, the attachment to a monolithic construction of Islam frozen in a vaguely pre-modern temporality, and the hazy mystical interpretation of historic form, appealed to architects. Given Ardalan's prominence as a practitioner, as well as his leadership within the Aga Khan Award for Architecture during the formative period of the 1980s, his influence on modern Islamic architecture may be greater than commonly assumed. Ardalan's remarks during an international symposium on Islamic architectural heritage in 1980 reveal how he translated his ideas into prescriptions for design practice and for preservation legislation: "This field of study is still very formative, yet the Islamic momentum is fast growing. Before immature ideas are espoused and made into LAW, it may be worthwhile to take a lead in this field, just to guide it in more sensible and meaningful directions."[3] Thus definitions of Islamic architecture were transformed and put into practice in unprecedented ways: another example of resonance, in this case between a modern Sufi school of interpretation and the architectural profession.

Recently, scholars have rethought the relationship between Islamic art and Islam. Some advocate allocating a greater role to Islam-as-religion in the interpretation of art, while remaining vigilant to sociohistorical context (Shaw 2012: 33). Others suggest that the relationship of Islam to Islamic architecture is discoverable through society's historical perception and use of architecture (Rabbat 2012a: 15). In each proposal the dialectic of Islam and Islamic art takes on new configurations.

The Corpus of Islamic Art: Inclusions and Exclusions

Islamic art history is constituted through a corpus of materials that can properly be assigned to it. Like all categories, "Islamic" comes with telling inclusions and exclusions. In the constitution of the corpus, the very formulation "Islamic art and architecture" may well have had some agency in transforming the objects and practitioners to which it has been applied.

Out of the material culture of Islamic societies, which have been multicultural and multireligious, what has entered the canon of "Islamic art" has frequently consisted of royal commissions, luxury goods, or the art of the powerful, as seen in the emphasis on court scriptoria in the Persianate empires (Flood 2007: 35; Necipoğlu 2012: 66–67). The arts of the less powerful, made for middle classes, or vernacular architecture have been less well researched.

Recent research explores how the boundaries of Islamic art have been drawn inter-culturally, between Islamic and other societies. However, Islamic art's boundaries are delimited *within* Islamic society as well. Egypt's case is illustrative. The earliest European texts depicted Egypt as a reflection of the past, arrested at an inferior stage of civilization (Preziosi 2003: 125–140). They rationalized its history along four chronological stages: Pharaonic, Greek-Roman, Coptic, and Arab-Islamic. Each category was conceived as pure and recognizable, and placed in a dedicated museum. Following taxonomic models developed for the natural sciences, this scholarship abhorred visual materials it considered "hybrid," that deviated from the normative categories, or that showed characteristics of more than one category (Flood 2007: 46). This process drew boundaries between Islamic and other arts produced within the same geographic space, and excluded or minimized the possibility of overlap or interaction. Presenting these categories successively in a neat chronology naturalized them, and concealed the fraught separation of artistic traditions.

In Egypt, this periodization and separation between Islamic art and other artistic traditions is especially striking in the distinction between the categories Coptic and Islamic, which in medieval Cairo coexisted temporally as well as spatially. Rather than exploring the interconnections between these categories, preservationists and museum professionals distributed objects that often featured formal similarities into distinct museums dedicated to each category (Bierman 2005). A similar understanding of distinct visual categories imbued the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe, established in 1881, that effectively preserved Cairo's vibrant historic core as a "medieval city" (AlSayyad *et al.* 2005).

This historiography continues to inform the interpretation of the past. For example, the façade of the Coptic Museum in Cairo (1910, restored 1984) reproduces the front of the al-Aqmar Mosque (1125) (Bierman 1995; Bierman 1998: 14) (Figure 47.2). Promoting Coptic art as a category related to but distinct from Islamic owed something to nineteenth-century European narratives, but its implementation required a local resonance, and the agency of Markus Simaika,

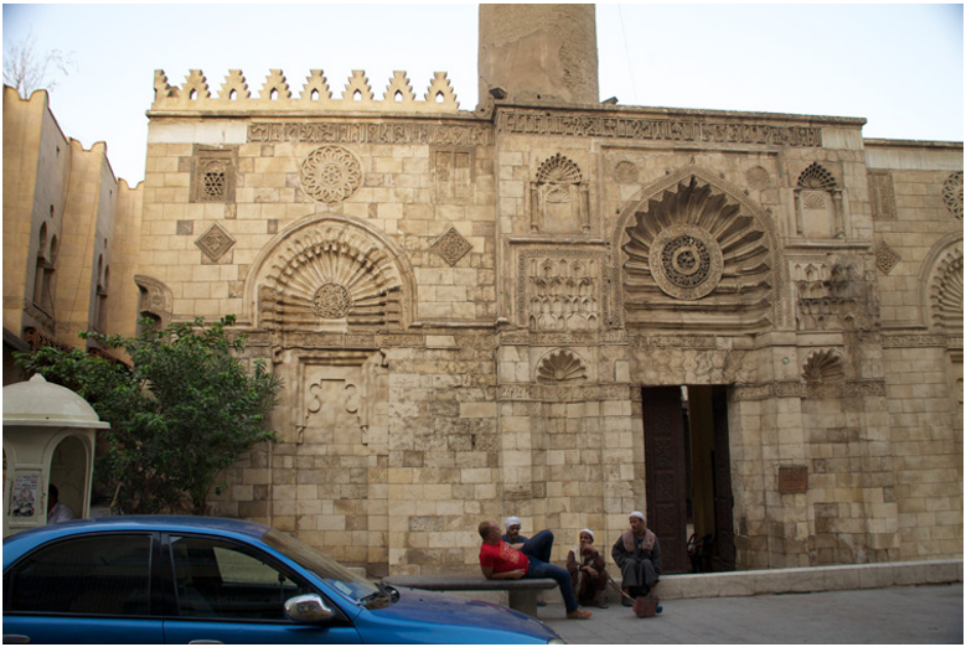

FIGURE 47.2 Façade of al-Aqmar Mosque (1125), Cairo, after restoration in the 1990s. Source: Jennifer Pruitt. Reproduced with permission.

the museum's Egyptian founder and longtime director (AlSayyad 2011: 19–37). The formation and codification of these categories reflect Western narratives, but also Egyptian society's negotiation of internal differences. These categories endure, endorsed by the contemporary Egyptian state rather than yesterday's imperial powers.

Other parts of the Islamic world underwent similar processes, circulating ideas, expertise, and skills among Western scholars and local actors involving art history, curation, and museum displays. Thus today's dominant narratives of the visual in the Middle East resonate with tropes from nineteenth-century constructions of the past.

Preservation and Destruction

While museums conserved portable works of art and architectural fragments, historic buildings called for a different expertise. The architectural canon was established partly through preservation, renovation, or removal of later "accretions" in ancient urban cores. In a concrete sense, then, what one is permitted to see on the ground today is the end result of these accumulated decisions, which promoted ideas of authenticity, cultural purity, and synchronic history similar to those that underwrote the taxonomic categories that informed such interventions. As the twentieth century progressed, with rapid modernization and a population explosion, urban planners in Islamic cities confronted choices between historic preservation or the large-scale demolition of dilapidated ancient quarters. This planning was conducted sometimes by colonial forces but also by postcolonial independent governments, and implemented by local and international professionals. Local initiatives and exigencies were in constant negotiation with international norms and expertise. This unfolded against the backdrop of successive trends in design and urban development, which featured flagship Middle Eastern projects, from those informed by international modernism, to critical regionalism, and the current neoliberal urbanism. While uneven, and contested, this process has affected even the most sacred Islamic sites. Mecca and Medina have experienced numerous additions and subtractions, some controversial (Bianca 2000: 219–248).

Clearly, repairs and updates are essential for any building from the past to have a viable function in the present, and may involve destructive aspects. By contrast, as the "Arab Spring" continues to unfold, with far-reaching and devastating effects on human lives and the built environment, it reminds us that today's notion of Islamic art and the objects on which it depends are both products of and shaped by the region's turbulent modern history. Colonialism, modernization, war, civil conflict, and atrocity have shaped what we are allowed or not allowed to see on the ground. For example, from the 1950s to the 1970s, urbanists pierced Aleppo's historic core with large thoroughfares suitable for vehicular traffic (Bianca 2000: 303–324). Preserved monuments, such as the Great Mosque, acquired a new urban context of wide streets, traffic lights, and spatial isolation. However, once Aleppo was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986, state officials, who had previously endeavored to adapt an aging urban environment to contemporary economic uses albeit aggressively, now turned to protecting and preserving the same environment as patrimony, an object of cultural value (Watenpaugh 2010: 217). Aleppo's historic core resulted from this accumulation of transformative choices favoring preservation, destruction, or adaptation.

As this suggests, the corpus of "Islamic art and architecture" is vulnerable and changing, the end result of ever-renegotiated choices by local and global forces. Mostar, Bamiyan, and Beirut exemplify instances where war and civil conflict result in the targeting of historical monuments. In addition, environmental degradation due to infrastructural projects also damage cultural heritage as in the case of the Aswan Dam (1970), or the hydraulic projects in Anatolia (Demirtaş 2000).

Some Middle Eastern governments may lack the means to safeguard cultural heritage, have little interest in its appreciation, or even instigate destruction. Nevertheless Islamic art objects remain vulnerable in major Western collections as well. The copy of the *Shahnama*, the Persian "Book of Kings" commissioned by the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp (*c.* 1525–1535), a manuscript central to the canon of Islamic art, was preserved integrally as a codex from the time of its creation only to be separated into individual folios and dispersed for sale in the 1980s by its American proprietor, following an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Blair and Bloom 1994: 168).

These processes of collection, reconstruction, preservation, destruction, and elimination collectively formulated the canon of Islamic art. The maintenance of the canon is, then, a matter of constant adjustment and renegotiation.

Reproduction and Exhibition, or the "Agency of Display"

Canon formation relies on historical narratives that select and order elements of the past while ignoring or excluding others. Art historical narratives conjure the impression of a knowable past that is coherent and traces a progression, while obscuring their own constructed, evolving (and often contingent) nature (Preziosi 1999). Yet, artworks were inducted into the canon through historically situated trajectories. The *Maqamat* of al-Hariri, illustrated by al-Wasiti in 1237, now central to Islamic art, entered historiography at the end of the nineteenth century, around its acquisition by the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (see Tabbaa and Contadini, CHAPTER 12 and CHAPTER 17). It became a symbol in the nationalism of Mandate-era and Ba'thist Iraq, and, through its reproduction in various twentieth-century media, a reference for contemporary artists like Jawad Salim (d. 1961) (see Lenssen and Rogers, CHAPTER 51).

The evolution of photographing and displaying Islamic art shows how the "agency of display" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 1–13) conditions the way an object is experienced, perceived, or understood. Exhibition strategies told (and continue to tell) stories about the nature and value of objects of Islamic art, from crowded Orientalist piles of bric-à-brac to art objects on pedestals offered for view in splendid isolation (Shalem and Lerner 2010; Vernoit 2000). The recent overhauls of Islamic collections at major museums renewed the discussion about exhibition practices, as curators grappled with choices and their implications. These included decisions in the presentation of objects, the crafting of historical or ahistorical narratives, and references to intercultural exchange (Ekhtiar *et al.* 2011; Junod *et al.* 2012; Roxburgh 2012).

Modes of displaying art also participate in circulation networks. Modernizing Middle Eastern states used official art museums to display narratives of their own, such as nationalist depictions of newly minted nation-states, with varying degrees of importance accorded to the Islamic period (Bahrani *et al.* 2011; Pieprzak 2010; Watenpaugh 2004). Apart from state institutions, myriad private museums use art to stage counter-narratives (Farhat 2012).

The accessibility of photographic or other reproductions of objects plays a key role in canon formation (Flood 2007: 32). Access to objects and sites, as well as to their visual record, can be difficult, as in the case of the twelfth-century minaret of Jam in a remote region of Afghanistan only studied in the 1950s (Flood 2009). It is no accident, then, that objects featured prominently in Islamic art surveys are often those available for reproduction with relative ease, leading to repetition within a “closed system” of objects. In the current age of relentless digital reproduction and manipulation, the circulation of such objects’ images acquires greater momentum (Keshani 2012). Yet reproduction raises questions about objects’ particular imageability and legibility. Objects that do not lend themselves easily to reproduction and display by virtue of their shape, medium, or scale, may find their place in the canon downplayed. Architecture and urban space similarly depend on photographic reproduction for dissemination. A critical history of Middle Eastern photography questions the role of the photographic gaze in promoting perceptions of Islamic architecture and urbanism (Bohrer 1999). As works of Islamic art and architecture are exhibited and reproduced in digital archives, they appear in contexts radically distinct from those for which they were intended:

> neither architectural monuments, nor portable luxury goods … were meant for display in museums as self-referential objets d’art or masterpieces. Instead, they were often seen *en masse* and experienced in particular settings or rituals that framed their signification process. The functionality, materiality, and “thingness” of portable objects – often exchanged as gifts and commodities – meant that their semantic horizon was largely dependent on context. Their interaction in specific settings with the gendered bodies of users or viewers activated multiple narratives and meanings (Necipoğlu 2012: 75).

Exhibitions of Islamic art, then, present works in contexts alien to their original intended functional settings. The narratives and meanings the objects might have activated in their pre-modern settings, the social and cultural worlds they created and sustained, are largely incompatible with today’s display practices.

The Creator’s Dilemma: Islamic Art and Muslim Identities

Contemporary exhibition practices condition how viewers, including artists and architects, encounter Islamic art. The category “Islamic art and architecture,” its historiography and associated modes of display circulate as contemporary creators consume and appropriate them. The practices of art and architecture here seem to follow somewhat distinct trajectories, but the case of architecture is particularly instructive. We could, for example, look to the career of the celebrated Egyptian architect, Hassan Fathy (d. 1989). During his long career, Fathy’s engagement with architectural history evolved, as he first followed an “authentic Egyptian” model, then an essentialized Arab identity, and finally an Arab-Islamic one (Rabbat 2003; Rabbat 2012a: 8). Fathy described the celebrated funerary complex of Sultan Hasan in Cairo (1356–1361): “[it] was designed to lead its visitor through the darkness of doubt, in the passage, to the light of revelation and belief, in the court, where the minaret leads the eyes to the sky pointing towards the divine source of that belief” (Kahil 2008: 23). This sketch emphasizes the phenomenological dimension of architecture, in line with a great deal of architectural writing in the twentieth century, and it is imbued with an equally modern notion of Islamic architecture as a metaphor for religious experience. The articulation of Islamic architecture lingers on the formal properties of buildings rather than their sociohistorical and functional contexts. Equally, Fathy expresses the Islamic dimension of the architecture in universalizing, and rather vague, spiritual terms. The focus on forms and on an abstracted spirituality resembles Ardalan's interpretation of Islamic architecture, signaling a broader pattern in the reception of Islamic architectural history by architectural professionals.

Since its establishment in 1977, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) has influenced the perception of Islamic architecture in the global architectural community as well as the practice of architecture in Islamic countries. The AKAA's archive in Geneva, which contains dossiers on all nominated projects, constitutes the only near-comprehensive archive of contemporary Islamic architecture. There have been few critical reflections on AKAA's role (Akkach 1997; Bartsch 2005; Bozdoğan 1992). The Award defines its terrain as "Islamic architecture." It forms part of a broader project to promote the study and practice of architecture in the Islamic world by Karim Aga Khan IV, the current Imam of the Shiʿi Ismaʿili Muslims, who chairs the Aga Khan Development Network of charitable organizations. The Award's chairman is no mere philanthropist but rather a religious leader; and to an Ismaʿili believer, he is the Imam of the Age. Thus the deployment of the term "Islamic" by the AKAA is inflected by his religious role. This is not the place to explore if or to what extent the Aga Khan's own publicly stated interpretation of Islam correlates with the Award's. Suffice it to say that the Award's vision of "Islamic architecture" is broadly inclusive, evincing "a philosophy of reconciliation" (Bozdoğan 1992). That expansive pan-Islamic attitude as a deliberate choice acquires further meaning given that Ismaʿilis constitute a minority within Islam.

The AKAA apparently defines Islamic architecture as any architecture created by Muslims, or for Muslims, or located in an Islamic country, or located anywhere but representing an Islamic group, or alluding to Islamic culture in some way. The Award's publications of winning projects constitute fascinating texts, bearing titles like "Architecture in the Spirit of Islam," that evoke the themes of the Sufi school of interpretation associated with Nader Ardalan, and discussed above.[4] The Award has honored buildings ranging from the Hajj Airport Terminal in Jeddah (1981) by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, to the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris (1980) by Jean Nouvel, to the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur (1996) by Cesar Pelli (Figure 47.3), as well as the restoration of historical sites like the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.[5] Religion forms the connection among buildings created in far flung areas, de-emphasizing other markers like Turkish, modern, sustainable, and so on. One could wonder whether Pelli imagined he was creating "Islamic architecture" when he designed the Petronas Towers. Nevertheless, the category has endorsed and appropriated his work.

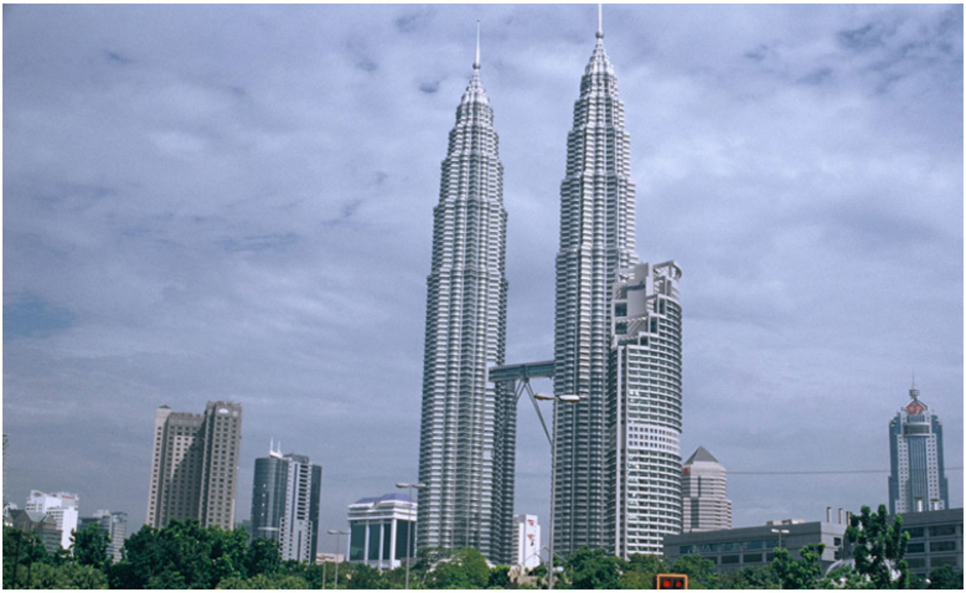

FIGURE 47.3 Cesar Pelli. The Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, 1991. Source: Kamran Adle/Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Reproduced with permission.

Contemporary practitioners make reference to historic architecture by including visual quotations, for example, or by the incorporation of specific motifs or spatial arrangements, albeit transformed in scale, material, and functional and urban context. The processes by which such motifs are selected and rendered meaningful in contemporary communities are complex. Forms understood as Islamic are particularly visible in mosques and cultural centers built for Muslim communities outside the Islamic world. They rely on a design shorthand that seemingly aligns with essentialized Orientalist notions:

> The predicament … is not that modernism has caused forms to collapse into signifiers of whole cultures … (for example, an all-subsuming Islamic "shape" in the form of a minaret or a dome), but that these ideas have somehow converged with some of the Muslim views … Indeed more and more purpose-built mosques in Europe and North America, mostly funded by the Wahabi sect (Sunni fundamentalists from Saudi Arabia), do seem to strive towards a "seamless national [Muslim] identity" inspired and guided by the colonial sense that the dome and minaret were the undisputed signs, not only of Islamic cultures, but Islam itself. (Avcıoğlu 2007: 101)

This suggests a process of Islamization of architecture that acquires added urgency outside the Islamic world, where mosques equipped with minarets and domes shoulder the responsibility of representing the past or Islamic identity. By contrast, some Muslim communities, as in New York, have found myriad ways to transform mundane urban spaces into neighborhood mosques. The markers they use may index regional or cultural identity, but they are not easily subsumed within hegemonic visual narratives (Dodds 2002).

If the case of architecture indicates an ambiguous engagement with the category of the "Islamic," a similar burden of representing Islam has fallen on artists with Middle Eastern and Islamic heritage worldwide, coinciding with the current marketability of modern and contemporary art from the Middle East. Post 9/11, in the global contemporary art world the label "Muslim artist" is loaded with assumptions and expectations, presenting both opportunities and burdens. Extending the canon of Islamic art to the vibrant and provocative productions of contemporary artists nonetheless begs the questions of what "Islamic art" means and how it functions. Given the assumptions prevalent among art patrons since 9/11, some Muslim artists in New York contested the way in which others politicize their identity (Jiwa 2004; Winegar 2008). Some artists opted to foreground Islamic identity in their work (Akšamija 2005), others did not. The contemporary globalized art market, with its fairs in far-flung locations and "biennale culture," provides opportunity for some "contemporary Muslim artists" (Smith 2011) for success, recognition, even celebrity.

Beyond cosmopolitan hubs, alternative art worlds also flourish. Self-defined "Muslim artists" who are women practice "traditional Islamic calligraphy" (Simonowitz 2010; Simonowitz 2012). While their art is ostensibly "traditional," the female calligraphers participate in thoroughly contemporary public spectacles, alongside politicians like Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey, where rituals of customary artistic apprenticeship are enacted such as the bestowal of *ijaza*s (diplomas). This art practice draws on the authority of what is construed as traditional, filtered through a contemporary, pious, Islamist Sunni sensibility. The notion of "Islam" in the art of these calligraphers correlates with religious identity, constituting another instance of the "Islamization" of Islamic art. Elsewhere, Indonesian artists grapple with the "Islamic" resonances of their work and possible national and transnational publics (George 2010). Thus, disparate contemporary cultural producers deploy "Islamic" art and history in distinct ways.

Islamization and Secularization in Dialogue

Concurrent trends to Islamize and secularize Islamic art have unfolded since the 1990s. On the one hand, philanthropists who emphasize their Islamic heritage over ethnic designations established public museums and private collections (Junod *et al.* 2012: 11). These collections appear to conceive "Islamic" art not only art-historically but also religiously. In the ongoing construction boom in the Gulf, planners invoke a paradigmatic "Islamic city," and architects make reference to historic Islamic architecture. "Islamic" terms and forms lend authority to architectural design and connect it to an imagined traditional past, albeit selectively recreated.

By contrast, a seeming secularization is apparent in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's decision to drop the term "Islamic" from the name of its galleries housing Islamic art, by renaming its remodeled galleries, "Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia." The use of ethnic or regional designations may represent a return to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century practices; despite the heralded name change, the remodeled galleries' catalogue and the media continue to use the term "Islamic" (Ekhtiar *et al.* 2011). The renaming seems to suggest that the category is rethought along secular lines, to better contextualize objects historically, or to de-emphasize Islam as an essentialized construct. The earlier discussion of the historical tensions between "Islamic" as referring to cultural or religious phenomena provides the context for the reception of the new galleries. The renaming raised questions about the logic of grouping these regions together, and gave the appearance of "plac[ing] Islam under erasure" (Rabbat 2012a; Roxburgh 2012; Shaw 2012: 10–13).

The dialectic between the secularization and Islamization of "Islamic art" is exemplified by Doha's two new museums. The Museum of Islamic Art displays objects constituting the traditional canon of Islamic art history, while Mathaf: The Arab Museum of Modern Art focuses on recent periods (see Lenssen and Rogers, CHAPTER 51). The museums seem to distinguish a pan-Islamic religiously inflected pre-modern past from a modernity distinguished along ethnic, national secular lines. The implications of this turn for scholars and practitioners will remain to be seen.

Conclusion

The discursive resilience of the category "Islamic" and its enduring appeal seem to depend on the longevity of nineteenth-century assumptions as much as on contemporary trends. Recently, pre-modern Islamic art objects have been instrumentalized to present an object lesson for a "true" notion of Islamic faith and culture:

> The implicit contrast between "modern" (intolerant) interpretations and manifestations of Islam and their more tolerant (and better informed) predecessors figures the objects of Islamic art as valorized repositories of an originary Islam corrupted through time, accepting the premise of "fundamentalist" Muslims, but inverting its meaning. (Flood 2007: 43)

The burden is thus placed on Islamic art to exemplify "good Islam," as defined by Western curators or politicians. Presenting Islamic art in a necessarily positive, conciliatory, tolerant aspect, forecloses the exploration of complex, ambiguous, or edgier meanings it may evoke. A positive stereotype may still stifle critical investigation.

While problematic, the instrumentalization of art within prescriptive narratives is a mainstay of art history. The economies within which these narratives circulate involve multidirectional flows between actors in various parts of the globe, despite asymmetries of power. Western scholarship may have created the category "Islamic art," but it was co-opted long ago by cultural producers in the Islamic world (Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu 2007). In 1951, Richard Ettinghausen wrote, "Muslim art can also have a special significance for the Muslim world of today. Since this is its one cultural achievement widely accepted and admired by the West, a rededication to it can compensate the East to a certain degree for its … retardation" (Ettinghausen 1951: 47). The patronizing tone notwithstanding, the statement captures what is at stake in co-opting the term for actors in the Islamic world: the cultural capital of a category of art hailed by the still-efficacious, persuasive power of art history and museums.

Thus the category "Islamic art and architecture" retains its cultural currency, even if the traditional canon of Islamic art is under revision. Islamic art history is more complex today than in the 1960s and 1970s, the time "nostalgically" evoked in recent overviews of the field (as noted in Necipoğlu 2012: 63), when it tended to be dominated by few (often male, European) scholars, regardless of their quality. Today, women scholars have achieved prominence, and no single figure or institution controls the future of Islamic art history. These positive changes, as well as the debates on the place of religion in Islamic art, may cause anxiety, but they also index diversity, competition, and creativity. Artists and architects, whether they embrace or reject the category Islamic art or the identity Muslim, or whether they subvert it or exploit its career-building potential, will craft their own narratives of "Islamic art."

Two concurrent recent episodes suggest the category's simultaneous resonance and distortion. The new Islamic galleries at the Louvre opened, funded by Saudi Arabian and other donors, at a crucial point in the definition of French and European citizenship against the backdrop of decolonization and the civil rights claims of Muslim immigrants. Simultaneously, upheaval reigns in Syria, the very terrain from which objects on display at the Louvre were excavated under colonialism. Grainy YouTube images, raw footage captured by cell phone cameras, show the shattered remnants of the eleventh-century minaret of the Great Mosque of Aleppo, a focus of preservation during the French colonial period and since (Figure 47.4). Both phenomena – the museological representation of Islamic art and attempts to memorialize its destruction – rely on the dissemination of digital photographic reproduction and media to reach audiences, and both hinge on the cultural prestige of Islamic art for their full effect. The near-simultaneity of these two actions should remind us, once again, that there is no single, triumphant, neat line in art history.

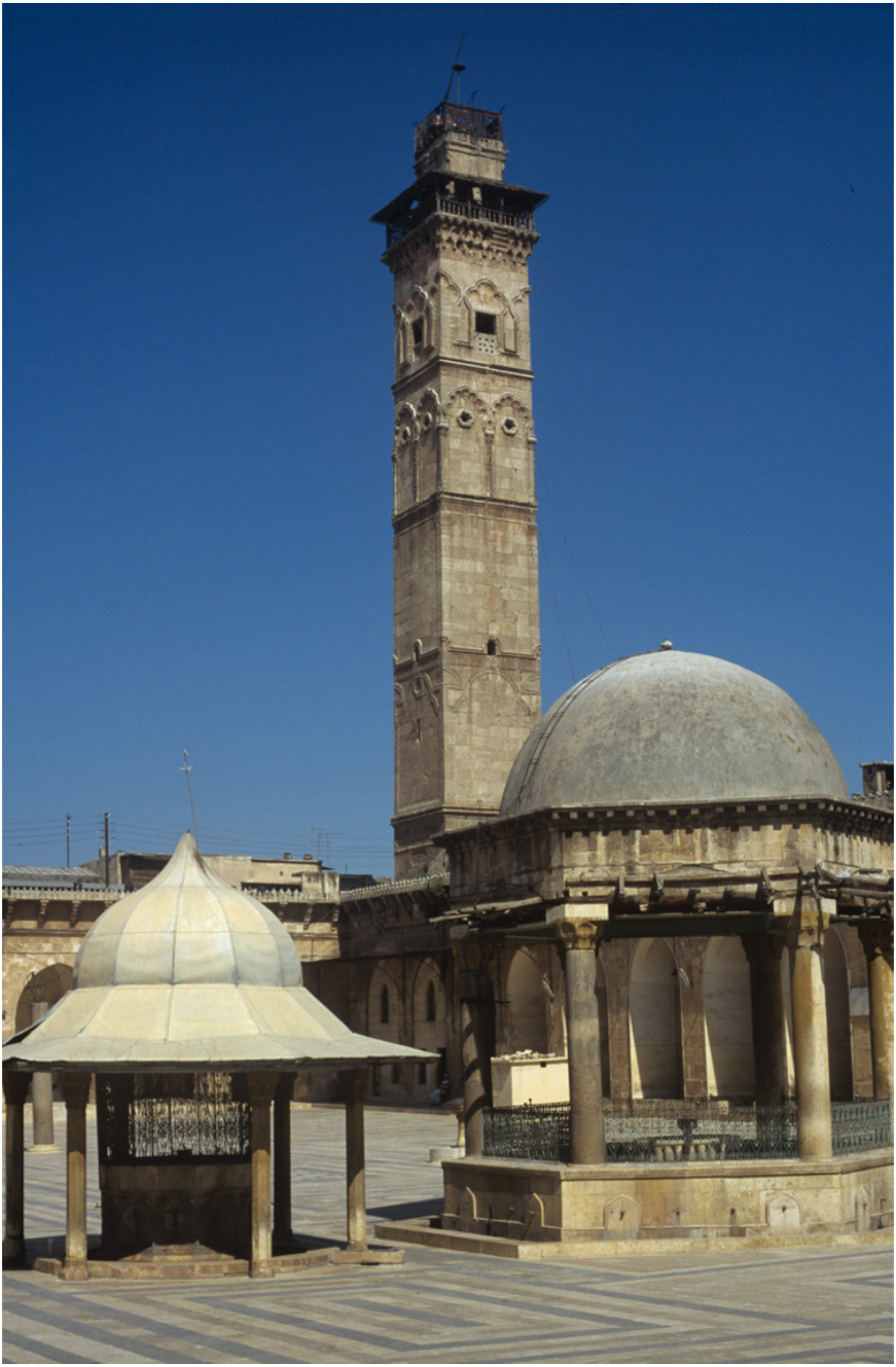

FIGURE 47.4 Minaret of the Great Mosque of Aleppo (1090), seen from the courtyard, before its destruction on 23 April 2013. Source: Heghnar Watenpaugh.

Notes

1 See Rémi Labrusse, CHAPTER 46, where he mentions among examples Julius Franz's *Die Baukunst des Islam* (1887); the author was the chief architect of the pious foundations (*awqaf*) in Cairo between 1881 and 1887; and the Czech architect Franz Schmoranz's exhibition catalogue published in Vienna in 1876 (*Historische Ausstellung des islamischen Orients*).

2 For Grabar, the mystical school had "fallen off the mark by over-emphasizing mystical esotericism or ethnically defined vernacular forms" (Shaw 2012: 29). Tabbaa characterized "Ardalan's occultic essentialism, Nasr's fundamentalism" (1999: 180–182). Rabbat 2012: 6: "these universalists … reinforced [conventional Islamic architectural history] by essentializing and 'transcendentalizing' it in a way that made it impervious to historical contextualization or criticism."

3 "Observations and Implications, by Nader Ardalan, April 25, 1980," In "International Symposium on Conservation and Restoration of Islamic Architectural Heritage. Sponsored by Pakistan and UNESCO. Lahore, April 6–12, 1980." Geneva, Archives of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Typescript # 930.A72 vol. 1.

4 Ardalan's collaborator Nasr authored the opening essay in AKAA's earliest publication (Anon. 1978).

5 http://www.akdn.org/architecture/publications (accessed 4 February 2017).

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48

Dubai, Anyplace: Histories of Architecture in the Contemporary Middle East

Kishwar Rizvi

Contemporary architecture cannot be limited by geographic or regional definitions. Nonetheless, issues of nationhood, history, and cultural identity continue to play a role in the types of projects undertaken to represent a country's future. Among these are also the multiple histories of architecture itself, concerning genealogies of the distant past as well as interpretations of a postmodern future. In the early years of the twentieth century, European and American architects were commissioned to experiment in contexts that appeared to them exceptional, and to actualize projects that opened up new horizons in their own practices. For local architects, such as those in the Middle East, modern architecture was equated with Westernization, and historical precedent was often marginalized in order to create what represented the new and progressive. In both cases, the ideals of modernism were understood through a displacement of context and history, as though the present itself provided utopian possibilities through which social, economic, and nationalist agendas could be realized. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, architecture continues to serve as prophetic, especially for nations that view themselves as newcomers to the global political stage.

The case of Dubai provides insights into understanding contemporary architecture in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is also significant to other countries in the Middle East, such as Qatar and Lebanon, which look to the rapid modernization taking place in the Gulf region as a template for their own development. This emulation takes place on the one hand by simply mimicking a particular brand of corporate architecture that exemplifies the development of Dubai, and

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on the other hand by establishing institutions whose primary goal is commercial, such as luxury malls and hotels. For example, Emaar Properties, a Dubai-based real estate developer, has international joint ventures that implement new projects to give the "Dubai effect." As its web site proclaims,

> Emaar is charting a new course of growth through a two-pronged strategy of geographical expansion and business segmentation. Replicating its successful business model in Dubai, Emaar is extending its expertise in creating master-planned communities to international markets… The company has established operations in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, India, Pakistan, Turkey, China, USA, Canada and United Kingdom.[1]

Whether through direct intervention, such as Emaar's, or through more subtle channels, the Dubai aesthetic is one that has permeated several parts of Asia, from Beirut to Shanghai. The images of prosperity that came to define the development of the Gulf States through oil wealth and real estate speculation were disseminated through sophisticated marketing tactics.[2] Often the commodities brought back by the thousands of migrant workers who helped make the transformation of Dubai possible were evidence enough of the economic opportunities Dubai presents. Dubai, for workers and visitors alike, represented a giant stage of possibilities measured, however, through the lens of money and commodities. The underbelly of this success was, and continues to be, vast discrepancies in wealth and the dissipation of traditional cultural markers (Kanna 2009: 208).

Numerous words have come to define Dubai's official image, including economic liberalism, Islam, Arab, modernization, and globalization. Before the 2008 economic crash, the city's luxury brands and excessive commercialism were flaunted in the popular press and in glossy magazines as examples of super-modernity, and were presented with a tinge of neo-Orientalist voyeurism (David 2007; Jensen 2007). In *al-Manakh*, a publication associated with the research arm of his firm, AMO, Rem Koolhaas valorized the supposed revelation of the Gulf and its rapid development, writing that

> The Gulf is not just reconfiguring itself; it is reconfiguring the world … Perhaps the most compelling reason to take the Gulf seriously is that its emerging model of the city is being multiplied in a vast zone of reduced architectural visibility that ranges from Morocco in the West, then via Turkey and Azerbaijan to China in the East. In each of the countries of this Silk belt, the Gulf's developers operate on a scale that has completely escaped our attention. (Koolhaas 2007: 7)[3]

The reiteration of the Silk Route and the privileging of the Western ("our") gaze are clearly symptomatic of Koolhaas's strain of architectural imperialism; however, in the case of Dubai it is also typical of a mindset in which the region presents a carte blanche for experimentation.[4]

Scholars have criticized the rapid development of the Emirates and the price paid in terms of urbanization and the loss of traditional forms of sociability. The anthropologist Ahmed Kanna writes of the nostalgia embedded in the identity of modern Emiratis, a longing for a place existing more in fictional tales than in historical facts. Ethnic distinctions – for example, many of the locals are of Iranian extraction – play a major role in creating class difference, even as the tribal past is extolled in political rhetoric (Cooke 2014; Kanna 2011). Nonetheless, Dubai serves as a model for the region, such that "the fusion of neoliberalism with Dubai's unique national character emancipates the city-state from its 'mere' Arabness, creating in the process an emergent Dubai identity both Arab and post-Arab or multinational" (Kanna 2009: 211). Architectural projects commissioned by the Dubai government straddle this multiplicity in the manner in which they evoke native typologies, Islamic precedent, corporate modernity, and the mid-twentieth-century "international style," as ways to represent a country grappling with issues that make the idea of a nation suspect.

History and Context

Settled since at least 1799, Dubai played a significant role in the trade and pearl industry of the Gulf, as part of the Ottoman Empire. Along with seven other shaykhdoms, it was a protectorate of Britain from the nineteenth century until 1971, when Dubai became part of the federation known as the United Arab Emirates (Davidson 2008). The Emirates are composed of Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, and – the capital of the federation – Abu Dhabi. Each of the Emirates, as the name implies, is a monarchy, in which the leader of Abu Dhabi, currently Shaykh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, acts as the President of the United Arab Emirates and that of Dubai, currently Shaykh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, is the Prime Minister. The al-Maktoum family has ruled over Dubai since 1833 and is closely associated with and invested in its development. Since the 1970s, oil wealth has defined rapid progress and development in this region of the Gulf. Dubai is among the least endowed of the Emirates; however, until the global economic crisis of 2008, it was second only to Shanghai as the world's largest construction site.

Central to Dubai's identity is the role of history, as interpreted by the Emirati ruling elite. As in other countries in the region, the government of Dubai aims to move beyond geographic and national boundaries while simultaneously drawing heavily on indigenous traditions. The seeming paradox is also representative of contemporary discourses within the fields of architectural history and practice, which similarly seek to find a balance between local and global trends (Jarzombek and Hwangbo 2011). Indeed architecture provides an important opportunity for the representation of nationalist ideals that mobilize the refashioned past, present, and the future of the country. Thus there are multiple histories at play in representing the modern nation, monumentalized through traditional forms and international institutions.

In creating a historical narrative for the United Arab Emirates, the government has sought to augment certain realities, while suppressing others. Thus, little is said about the status of the region as a province of the Ottoman Empire until the nineteenth century, even as museums extol its ancient history. Archaeological finds from the late antique period are juxtaposed against the seemingly timeless images of dhows and camels, meant to signify the indigenous past. Inventing new traditions (such as camel racing) and juxtaposing them against older cultural practices (such as poetry recitation), the government aims to create a nationalist narrative that is seemingly unique to the United Arab Emirates (Khalaf 2000).

Given the diversity of ethnic and tribal alliances that make up the United Arab Emirates, the idea of a national identity is complicated by the need to conform to collective historical and cultural norms. In this chapter, I discuss five examples of architecture in Dubai that were commissioned to describe particular themes of identity and history; they consist of a mosque, a museum, a national bank, the first freehold construction, and what is currently the world's tallest building. These examples are typical of what may be considered a global imaginary based on corporate architectural culture; in the case of Dubai, this imaginary merges with issues of religion and residency. All the projects make apparent the complex representations undertaken by this Emirate to construct an idealized past while projecting a utopian future. In so doing, what is revealed is not the particularities of architecture in Dubai alone but the contingencies of architectural modernism in the new millennium.

The speed at which the city has developed and the government's response in creating public spaces is remarkable (Elsheshtawy 2010). Nonetheless, anonymity defines Dubai, whether viewed in its emergent skyline of stylish high-rises, or etched on the faces of the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers that build them. Coexisting in this thriving polis are the Emirati elite, their indentured servants, prostitutes, and merchants. The society is extremely compartmentalized and kinship plays a key role in the manners in which Emiratis socialize; people's lives intersect in educational, entertainment, and professional settings. As Ahmed Kanna writes, "Like other Gulf states, Dubai is neither an autocracy nor a democracy, but rather an ethnocracy" (Kanna 2011: 30). The fragmented ties of those outside the framework of Emirati kinship result in tensions within the multiethnic and multinational state and raise difficulties when it comes to creating a national identity. For example, who are the users and audiences for the public buildings? Whose history is being evoked?

The heterogeneity of the population is reflected in the multiplicity of Dubai's architectural imprint: shanties, villas, skyscrapers, malls, wildlife reserves, and expatriate enclaves – familiar components of a large city in any part of the world. The social consequences of these segregated communities are without doubt. It is a striking statistic that only 17 percent of the population in Dubai is Emirati with the largest group of residents being migrant workers from South and Southeast Asia.[5] This remarkable number points to a complex relationship between power and identity, and makes us question the role of the built environment in such contexts. Urbanists and anthropologists alike have criticized the attention paid by architects and the media to grandiose architectural projects which appear to ignore the social issues of labor and migrancy that are central to Dubai's development (Lacayo 2008; Sorkin 2009). They rightly point to the need for accountability on the part of the patrons and architects for ensuring the rights and well-being of the immigrants living in the United Arab Emirates in squalor and without any legal recourse. Thus when looking at specific nationalist projects, as this chapter will do, it is crucial to be mindful of the ethical repercussions. Yet the goal here is not to dismiss the significance of Dubai's architectural history owing to these issues, but rather it is to situate it within the context of nationalist politics and regional trends.

Constructing an Imperial Past

Dubai is currently home to the tallest building and the largest enclosed mall in the world, reflecting a record-breaking competitiveness that makes "size matter." Much has been written about the "global" nature of Dubai's development, but less attention has been given to religion, culture, and history in the Emirates. Complementary to the image of commercialism disseminated in foreign media, Emirati society is a deeply traditionalist society, in which faith plays a large role in daily life.[6] The majority of Emiratis are Sunni Muslims and the government of Dubai adheres to the Maliki school of jurisprudence, which was the earliest to emerge and pays close attention to traditions of the Prophet and his companions. Emiratis originally from the coastal areas of southern Iran comprise the 22 percent Shiʿa population, having lived there for several generations. The city is thus dotted with mosques, the urban landscape punctuated with domes and minarets. Each neighborhood of Dubai, for example, has a local mosque, often privately financed with government subsidy. The design and location of the mosques reflect the constituency for whom they were built. For example, the Iranian Hospital and Mosque are located in the al-Bada neighborhood, one of the oldest areas in the city. The two buildings are adjacent to each other, revetted in brick and tile-work. The mosque, even more than the hospital, gives the impression of being directly imported from Iran, with its minarets and dome embellished with intricate mosaics reminiscent of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Safavid architecture (see Babaie and Kafescioğlu, CHAPTER 33). Nearby is the Iranian Consulate, with its majestic gateways meant to evoke the nineteenth-century Qajar architecture of the capital Tehran (see Grigor, CHAPTER 41).

The Jumeirah Mosque is the recognizable "Great" mosque of Dubai and is a prominent landmark in the city (Figure 48.1). It was commissioned by the ruler of Dubai at the time, Shaikh Rashid bin Saeed al-Maktoum (d. 1990) and built by an Egyptian construction company, Hegazy Engineering Consultancy in 1979.[7] The mosque is located between the old financial center of the city and the exclusive tourist enclave of Jumeirah Beach, on the busy Jumeirah Road. The building is clad in yellow-pink sandstone, with two tall minarets and a prominent dome that are elaborately

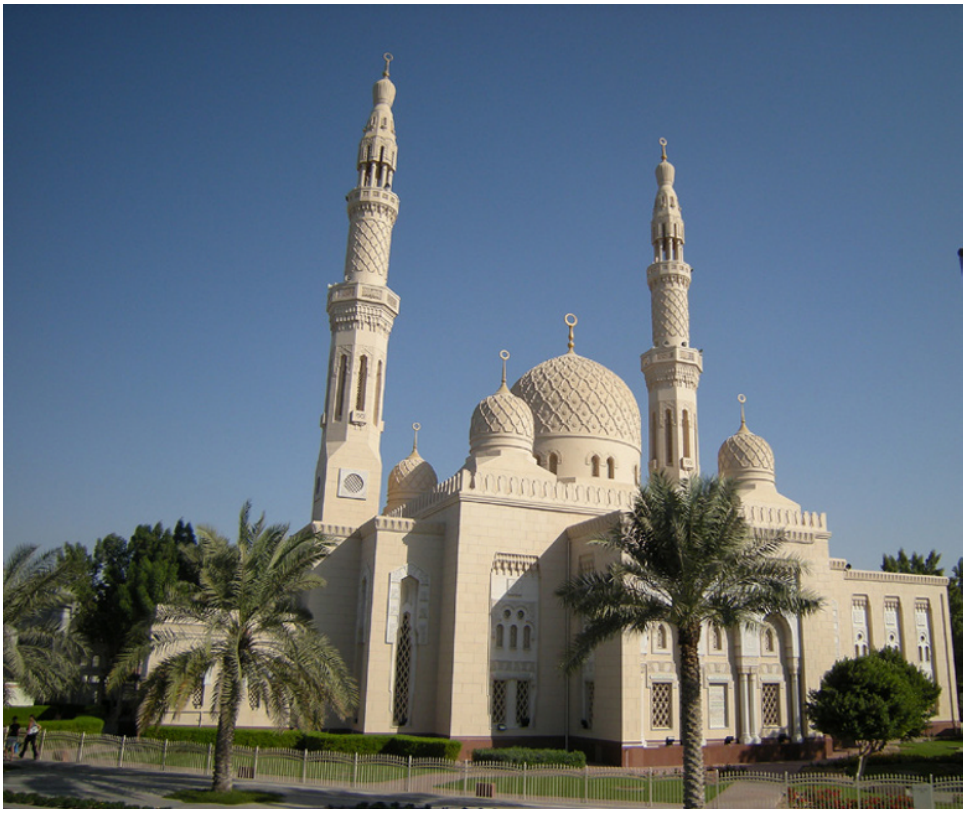

FIGURE 48.1 Jumeirah Mosque, Hegazy Engineering Consultancy, *c*. 1979. Source: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Search&search=mesquita+jumeirah&fulltext=1&profile=default&searchToken=227nx2likcjy01emvrz195ghe#/media/File:Mesquita_Jumeirah_(4128588527).jpg (accessed March 31, 2017). Copyright: Copyright info: CC BY 2.0

carved in deep relief. Calligraphic panels are inserted over doorways and windows, whereas the ornamental carving on the minarets and dome is abstracted and geometric. The forms are reminiscent of medieval Cairene Mamluk architecture, with its intricate, patterned stone carvings (Rizvi 2015; see also O'Kane, CHAPTER 23).

The stylistic connection is clear and deliberate, as was the fact that an Egyptian firm was given the commission, typifying the longstanding relationship between the Emirates and Egypt, both of them Arab nations formerly under Ottoman and British authority.[8] The Mamluk dynasty holds great meaning for the new rulers in the Gulf, who associate themselves with these ethnic Turks who as conquerors ruled Egypt, Syria, and the Hijaz during the thirteenth through early sixteenth centuries, prior to Ottoman and European rule over the region. Although according to the English version of the Dubai City web site the Jumeirah Mosque is built "in the medieval Fatimid tradition … and … is a tribute to modern Islamic architecture,"[9] the Arabic language site does not mention any stylistic affinities.

According to the engineer in charge of the construction the reason for this omission is that the Fatimid dynasty of medieval Cairo (r. 969–1171) represents an Isma'ili Shi'i dynasty, something that would be problematic in the staunchly Sunni Emirate (see Anderson and Pruitt, CHAPTER 9).[10] That the engineer designing and building the mosque himself conflates two very different Cairene styles and periods (tenth- to twelfth-century Fatimid and thirteenth- to sixteenth-century Mamluk) is surprising, if not unexpected, given the lack of awareness most architects and designers have of Islamic architectural history in many developing countries. Hence the persistence of an eclectic merging of elements from diverse styles in an Orientalist manner reminds us that the long-nineteenth century is not over. The audiences for the Arabic and English commentary are different but difficult to define. The sparse presence of Emiratis in public spaces, such as the Jumeirah Mosque, means that the Arabic commentary is most likely also meant for expatriate Muslim visitors who do, indeed, make up the bulk of the clientele of the mosque during prayer hours.

The epigraphy of the mosque is made of common prayers written in a clear and legible script accessible to anyone able to read Arabic, Persian, or Urdu, namely the numerous Arabs, Iranians, and Pakistanis that also call Dubai their home. There are two primary entrances to the mosque, one facing the busy Jumeirah Road and the other facing a parking lot in a quiet neighborhood. Worshippers enter the mosque through the entrance facing the parking lot, which is also where the epigraphy is most prominent. Above the doorways is a panel with a Qur'anic verse written in bright green paint that encourages believers to care for their spaces of worship, pray regularly, and give alms (Qur'an 9: 18). The interior of the prayer hall is adorned with the Victory verse (Qur'an 48) which begins, "Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory," and continues to reiterate the power of Allah and of Islam. Historically, this verse is commonly found in contexts where state and theological powers are merged in order to signal the overlay of divine and earthly authority. Its use in the context of a national symbol is, thus, most appropriate.

The function of the mosque as a prayer site is maintained, and yet the Jumeirah Mosque also expands the parameters of Islamic practice. The mosque is home to the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding which organizes tours aimed at "promoting cultural understanding and first-hand experience as an insight to the Islamic religion."[11] Official tours are offered for a fee, and are led by English-speaking guides. At these times, the doors of the Jumeirah Mosque are opened to non-Muslims. The mosque represents what may be the only view of Islam many tourists in Dubai may get, given the segregated social norms. In its willingness to engage – or at least invite – a conversation with people of other faiths, the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding presents a moderate version of Islam; perhaps as a corrective to the more common images of regional violence that have come to dominate the media (Rizvi 2013).

The Jumeirah Mosque monumentalizes history not as a conceptual term alone but also as an aesthetic style that merges belief with identity. The mosque is an ideal type for disseminating cultural and religious values, and for framing them historically through the use of stylistic references. Hegazy Engineering

Consultancy, the designers and builders of the Jumeirah Mosque, were also responsible for another iconic mosque in Dubai, the Bastakiya Mosque in Bur Dubai.[12] It is in the old Bastakiya neighborhood and conforms to a more pared-down silhouette than the Jumeirah Mosque. The building is a simple white structure, with pointed arches announcing the entrance, a single minaret, and a dome, typical features of a mosque. The minaret is a square pillar topped with a covered balcony that looks like a Mughal pavilion, and the dome, in contrast, a flattened hemisphere, again inspired by Indian architecture. Unlike the Jumeirah Mosque, the Bastakiya Mosque is a pastiche of styles and references, in keeping with the heterogeneous, privately funded mosques throughout the Emirates.

The manner in which the Jumeirah Mosque monumentalizes its historical references through precise quotation points to the patrons' recognition of imitation as a potent resource in creating a national imaginary. In this case, architecture provides an archaeology of forms, in which buildings act as repositories of knowledge that refer to particular historical events as well as geographical locations. The past is defined by a particular understanding of "Arab" identity, with an emphasis on imperial and monarchial authority. In such a conceptualization, the Arabic language connects Fatimid Cairo to the United Arab Emirates, even if anachronistically.[13]

Historical reference is not limited to religious buildings alone but permeates several facets of urban life in Dubai. For example, Nakheel Properties, a development corporation owned by a member of the Maktoum family, has built one of the largest malls in the world with "a uniquely themed environment that is designed to reflect the unique combination of various heritages and cosmopolitan lifestyle that is the very essence of Dubai."[14] The mall is themed on the itinerary of Ibn Battuta (1304–1377), a Moroccan writer who documented his famous travels from North Africa to China. The Ibn Battuta Mall celebrates this *rihla* (travel) by dedicating different geographic themes for each of the six sections of the sprawling building. They are distinguished physically, such that the courts are designed to each represent the architecture of Andalusia, Tunisia, Egypt, Iran, India, and China, much like pavilions in nineteenth-century imperial and international exhibitions. The pavilions appear to simultaneously index the multinational communities in Dubai as well as take pride in medieval Arab cosmopolitanism and trade. Unlike themed parks and hotels in Europe and the United States, which simulate buildings simply through visual quotation, the Ibn Battuta Mall replicates the expensive material and the high quality of their craftsmanship as well.[15]

In the emphasis on materiality and detailing, both the mall and mosque make evident the economic wealth of Dubai, even as the simple recycling of styles speaks to a certain imaginative poverty. Thus, the Jumeirah Mosque may be viewed as another example of postmodern historicism, with its kitsch references that parody the very past that they appear to valorize. Yet that is clearly not the intention of either the builder or the patron. Instead, their goal appears to be to mine the past as a source of inspiration, for the architecture as well as the nation which the rulers of Dubai are trying to construct.

Heritage Reclaimed and Reimagined

The rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century coincided with the rise in significance of public museums (see Shaw and Vernoit, CHAPTER 44 and CHAPTER 45). In the European context, these were closely associated with colonial forms of rule, set up to display not only national treasures but also the spoils of conquest.[16] In countries such as Turkey, the national museum served as a medium to learn about ancient histories through the archaeological discoveries of the nineteenth century and to preserve the immediate past in the face of rapid modernization (Shaw 2003). Ancient history would provide the architectural iconography of indigenousness that was deployed in architecture and the arts of the early twentieth century (Isenstadt and Rizvi 2008). Traditional arts were similarly employed to further the goals of nationalism, providing a unifying culture for the newly formed citizens and their representative governments. The "invention of tradition," a phrase coined by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983), meant that a new narrative – separate from dynastic or religious histories – was to be created to formalize the rituals and processes associated with nationhood in the twentieth century. The national museum became a prime example of institutional buildings commemorating statehood, a role that it still fulfills throughout the globe.

Institutions such as museums and universities were designed with particular styles and iconography that linked the past with the present. For example, the entrance to the Iran Bastan Archaeological Museum in Tehran, designed by the French scholars André Godard and Maxime Siroux and completed in 1939, was in the form of the Taq-i Kira, the arch of the Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon. The design was a response to the archaeological finds housed within, acknowledging thus also Iran's pre-Islamic past. In a related manner, buildings once belonging to monarchial regimes were renovated to cohere with new republican ideals. Such a functional and ideological transfer is exemplified in the transformation of the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, the residence of the Ottoman sultans from the fifteenth well into the mid-nineteenth century. Following the end of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the dynastic palace became a public museum. The United Arab Emirates are latecomers to the league of modern nations, still retaining monarchial and tribal allegiances that are, nonetheless, complemented by bureaucratic governmental institutions. The idea of nationhood is complicated further by the diverse and heterogeneous society that calls Dubai home. Nonetheless, the government of Dubai has seen fit to promote the history of the city-state as one that is necessary for preservation.

The al-Fahidi Fort, which was constructed in 1799 near the Dubai Creek, was designated a historical and national monument in 1971 and transformed into a museum. It had been the residence of the ruling al-Maktoum family when they moved from Abu Dhabi in 1833 (Boussaa 2006: 127; Kay and Zandi 1991: 82). The fort is believed to be the oldest extant building in the city, constructed in defense against neighboring tribes. It is located in the Bastakiya neighborhood in Bur

Dubai, close to a vibrant commercial and residential area. Nearby is Abra Souk, named after the constant water taxi traffic that brings visitors and tourists alike, and connects the area to the rest of the city. The low mud-brick buildings are packed together in narrow streets, their wind towers (*bādgīr*) punctuating the skyline. The architecture is closely related to that of many towns along this area of the Indian Ocean, from Iran to Pakistan, and points to the cosmopolitan trading past of Dubai.

Al-Fahidi Fort was repurposed in 1971, but it was not until 1995 that modern galleries and display areas were built within the museum (Figure 48.2). The original walls of the Dubai Museum (as it is also known as) contain shards of coral and shells mixed in the mud, and their distressed look is preserved in order to evoke a sense of its history. On one side, a massive tower anchors the fort complex and on the other side is a large *dhow* (boat) that serves as an outdoor sculpture as well as signage for the museum. The entrance to the museum is flanked by cannons, reminding the visitor of the defensive purpose of the fortress-museum.

In this essentially ethnographic museum, exhibits displaying weaponry and defensive technology are located in rooms along the periphery of the courtyard, whereas a small, wooden, *barasti* house has been constructed in its center. Inside, mannequins show how villagers traditionally lived before Dubai's modernization. In one corner of the courtyard, a grand stairway leads down to the basement level of the museum where numerous dioramas have been assembled. Visitors are

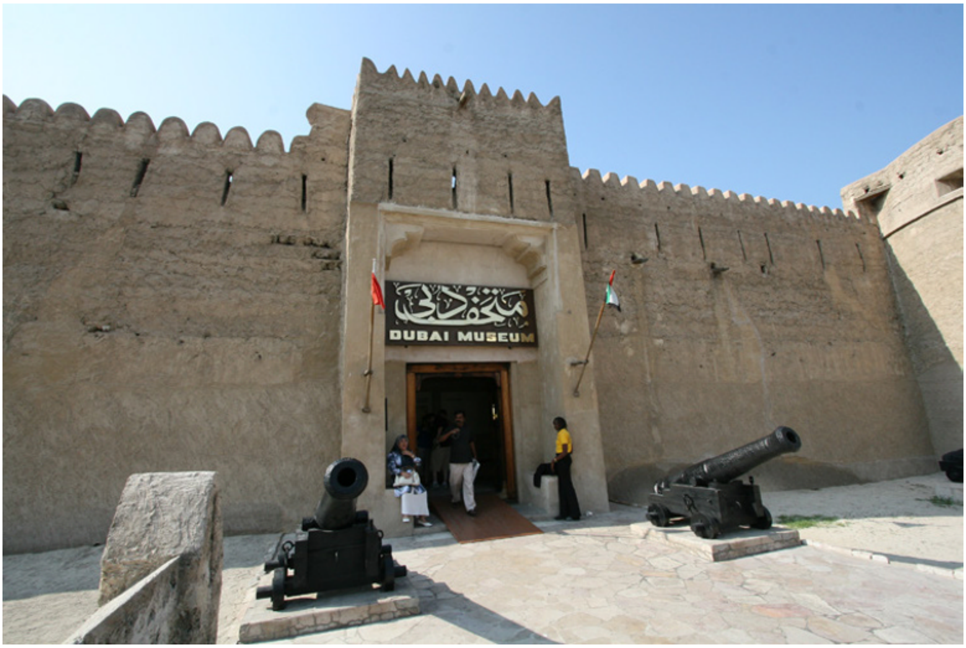

FIGURE 48.2 Al-Fahidi Fort, renovated *c.* 1995.

guided on a precise route charting the history of Dubai, starting with archaeological discoveries in the region and continuing with "Natural Phenomena." Whole environments are created to simulate the desert at night and an oasis by day, both displaying the natural beauty of the region. The largest section is devoted to an "underwater" exhibit of marine life, which not only shows the flora and fauna of the Persian Gulf but also the pearl fishers that typified the local industry.

Putting the "original" inhabitants of the United Arab Emirates on par with the native animals and vegetation is a trope in many natural history museums. While it speaks of a colonial mindset, it is a practice that has come to define nationalist intentions. This is reflected not only in the Dubai Museum but also in other similar institutions throughout the United Arab Emirates, such as the Archaeology Museum in Sharjah and the Qasr al-Hosn Fort ("the symbolic birthplace of Abu Dhabi"), both of which serve as repositories of the Emirates' deep history. The importance given to native people and to the land upon which they live creates what Benedict Anderson has called "imagined communities" of people united neither by tribes nor by political ideologies but by the very fact of belonging to the native soil (Anderson 1983). This narrative of indigenousness, that is, an identity related to the land, is aimed directly at constructing a nationalist history. However, the history of Dubai is presented as an intangible one, lost to the vagaries of oil wealth and its consequential rapid development.

The Dubai Municipality has tried to preserve the character of the neighborhood of al-Fahidi Fort and Bastakiya with the construction of the Grand Mosque, a large space for the Friday congregational prayers. In addition, commerce in the Old Souk, or marketplace, is carried on in ways that make it an appealing destination for tourists and residents alike. The traditional neighborhood of Bastakiya is now considered a heritage site and several buildings there have been converted into art galleries and restaurants. In utilizing a rather heavy hand in terms of preservation, the government has inadvertently caused the area to lose some of its vibrancy. At the end of the day, the shops and galleries close and Bastakiya becomes an empty shell, devoid of life. Like the National Museum that occupies the old al-Fahidi Fort, Bastakiya has become museumized: a heritage exhibit, frozen in time.[17]

A Capitalist Modernity

Activating the past through historic reference is an oft-repeated method in the dissemination of nationalist ideology, as demonstrated by the previous examples. The Jumeirah Mosque provides a neo-Mamluk-cum-neo-Fatimid interpretation, whereas the Dubai Museum recreates the city's geography, preserved and exhibited for consumption by natives, expatriates, and tourists alike.[18] Where does the modern history of Dubai belong in such a nation-building agenda? It cannot be reduced, as it sometimes is, to the simple fact of oil discovery and wealth, which has led to the exuberant – and unsustainable – growth that the entire region has experienced. Nor can it be symbolized in terms of the commercialism of malls and shopping plazas that attract millions of tourists to the city. Dubai is perhaps best known for its high-rise development, which has transformed the main Sheikh Zayed Road from a dusty thoroughfare hurtling toward Abu Dhabi into a concrete and glass canyon, with elegant as well as kitsch examples of contemporary architecture.

Although oil production was still a central form of wealth production, already in 1985 the Jebel Ali Free Zone was established to bring foreign capital and industry to the Emirate (Davidson 2008: 114). In the 1990s the Emirate introduced free trade and a liberal market economy which encouraged investment and development. The commercial zone along the Dubai Creek echoes the historic Spice Souk nearby, where Iranian immigrants own shops in a traditional covered marketplace, selling everything from Chinese exports to spices from all over Asia. At another end of the Creek is the famed Gold Souk, where visitors flock to barter for gold sold by merchants from India to Saudi Arabia. The waterfront bustles with activity, with immigrant workers loading and unloading large boats traveling along the Indian Ocean.[19] Alongside the modest *abra* water taxis, 20-foot yachts idle along the docks, while large, refurbished *dhow*s – the traditional mode of transportation – now take tours up and down the Creek.

Development of the Dubai Creek maintained the historical trading and commercial character of the area, with the construction of the National Bank of Dubai (NBD) in 1979, designed by the British architectural firm John R. Harris and Partners (JRHP).[20] The architect had been invited by Shaikh Rashid bin Saeed al-Maktoum in 1960 to help develop a master plan for Dubai (Reisz 2008: 131). In 1966 oil was discovered, which prompted the ruler to commission JHRP to design the tallest skyscraper in the Arab world at the time, the Dubai World Trade Center (DWTC), which was inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II in 1979 (Hawley 2007: 18). The monument went into construction just as the World Trade Center Towers were being completed in New York City. The NBD, in contrast to the towering DWTC, is a typical, two-story bank building, with its concrete structure and functional programming. Other national banks were built along the Dubai Creek, such as the corporate head office of the British Bank of the Middle East designed by JRHP and the Bank Melli of Iran, the national bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Dubai was established as a banking center whose presence on the world stage was realized and then monumentalized. The Dubai Creek, like the Sheikh Zayed Road thoroughfare that runs through the heart of the city and on which the DWTC was built, symbolizes the trading history of this Gulf state and its commercial aspirations.

Perhaps one of the most important symbols of Dubai's mercantile pedigree is Emirates NBD, designed by the Uruguayan architect Carlos Ott in consultation with the multinational NORR group in 1997 (Figure 48.3).[21] On one side of this tall multistory building, located directly on the Dubai Creek, is the Dubai

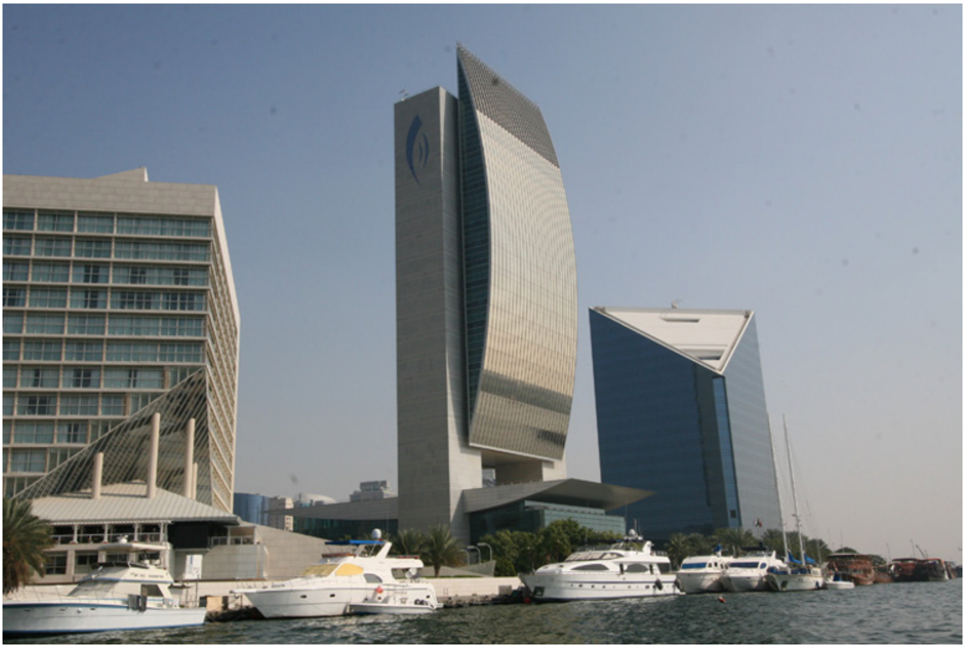

FIGURE 48.3 Emirates NBD, Carlos Ott in consultation with NORR, 1997.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry and on the other side, the Sheraton Dubai Creek Hotel and Tower. Emirates NBD prides itself as employing "more than 8,000 employees from over 50 nationalities" and serving as "an ambassador of economic and social progress."[22] The bank thus embraces the cosmopolitan and commerce-driven zeitgeist of the city. Similarly cosmopolitan is Carlos Ott, who was trained at the University of Hawaii, with offices at the time in Quebec, Toronto, Shanghai, Dubai, and Montevideo.[23]

According to Ott's web site,

> The headquarters of the National Bank of Dubai is an imagery (sic.) of the dhow, a regional boat centuries old used in the Indian Ocean, and the establishment of Dubai as a market place. Its curved curtain wall represents the billowing sail, supported by two granite columns. The base of the building, the banking hall, is clad in green glass representing the water and its roof of aluminum, the hull of the boat.[24]

The design is thus meant, according to the architect, to signal a local reality by abstracting the forms of the "centuries-old" dhow, and creating analogies with the sails, the water, and so on. Such ahistorical references have often been utilized by foreign architects building in the Middle East, in particular the Gulf. Two examples from Saudi Arabia are useful to consider. First there is Frei Otto's Intercontinental Hotel and Conference Centre in Mecca, built in 1974 in the form of a large tent canopy. It is a tensile structure that is meant to be "a synthesis of advanced structural techniques and revived local artistic traditions that had become almost extinct."[25] Similarly, the Hajj Terminal built in Jeddah by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) in 1982 has a roof structure in the form of multiple tents, their white canvas pulled taut, as though against desert winds. Literal abstraction is not unique to the Middle East, given such famed examples as the Sydney Opera House in Australia, designed by Jørn Utzon in 1957 and completed in 1973. The opera house is located on Sydney harbor, and its roof is formed as a series of overlapping shells, evoking the white, billowing sails of a boat. In all these examples, primordial forms are meant to evoke a sense of timelessness, choosing simple allusions over complex stylistic or historical references.[26] Both Saudi Arabia and Australia were on the margins of great empires, with important cities that thrived on commerce and trade for their existence. In the eyes of the architects, imported to help build national institutions in the twentieth century (like banks, opera houses, and airports), these countries lacked monumental architecture. Thus, there was a need to go beyond history for inspiration, to timeless naturalist tropes of waves and sails. Yet, in actuality, these abstract forms could be deployed in any location, from Miami to Muscat.

The form of the Emirates DNB evokes something more than the sails and hull of the dhow or the colors of the sea. The forms and material are abstracted to the degree that one might not recognize the references, especially if removed from its maritime context. Indeed, the inspiration for the Emirates DNB may be found in the pages of books on modern architecture, especially of the so-called international style that was popular in the United States and Europe in the middle of the twentieth century (Hitchcock and Johnson 1932). The style, valorized by the likes of Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in the early twentieth century, came to exemplify modern architecture, with its clean lines and lack of referential ornamentation. It also represented, by mid-century, American corporate culture, through the commission of such iconic buildings as the Seagram Building (1958) in New York City, home of American capitalist culture at its peak.

The glass curtain wall of the Emirates DNB clearly reflects the international style and can be formally related to the earliest skyscrapers ever built. A direct reference is made to the Lever House in New York, designed by Gordon Bunshaft for SOM in 1952, with its tower and slab typology.[27] In the year of its construction, the British architect Fello Atkinson wrote,

> These buildings do for modern commercialism what the medieval churches did for liturgy or the Baroque palace for monarchy. That is, they do not merely answer [to] specific functions which are implicit in all good building. They answer a deeper social need. By their beauty they give both pleasure and dignity to those whose life is spent in them. (Atkinson 1952)

For Atkinson, as for builders and patrons around the globe, American corporate architecture provided a new vision of postwar success and prosperity.[28] A closer parallel may be drawn to the Boston Federal Reserve Bank built by Hugh

Stubbins in 1977, which was also a state institution along the lines of the Emirates DNB's original designation, the Dubai National Bank. The tall glass tower is offset in both banks with the horizontal slab, although the articulation is ultimately quite different. American bank buildings were deeply embedded in capitalist culture, an association easily appropriated by the newly wealthy Gulf monarchies, such as those of the Emirates. The Emirates DNB is thus evocative of, in a very fundamental way, the history of modern architecture itself.

Skyscraper Dreams

References to twentieth-century American corporate architecture, in particular the skyscraper, are the norm in contemporary Dubai as elsewhere in Asia.[29] A literal example may be found in the form of the al-Kazim Towers, situated on Sheikh Zayed Road (Figure 48.4). The towers were designed by the architectural and engineering firm, National Engineering Bureau (NEB) and completed in 2008 at a cost of AED 630 million. Each tower comprises 53 floors of mixed residential and commercial space, and has been designed in imitation of the Chrysler Building in New York City, with its roof comprising cascading sunburst patterns. In 2002, Dubai became the first of the Emirates to offer freehold property to foreign-born residents. Until that time, all land ownership was in the hands of the Gulf Coast countries and UAE nationals, but with the burgeoning tourist economy of Dubai, the change to freehold was seen as an economically and socially viable move.

The Chrysler Building has inspired many reinterpretations of its iconic form, such as Liberty Place in Philadelphia (1985–1990) and Argentina Square in Tehran.[30] It was designed by William van Alen and completed in 1930, at the height of the Great Depression in the United States. Thereafter, it has come to symbolize not only one of the most wealthy and cosmopolitan cities in the world but also the industrial and capitalist culture that is signified in its very name. In Dubai, unsurprisingly, it is not only replicated but also multiplied, as not one but two identical towers. However, here the roof structure is reduced to a space frame, outlining the design of the ornamental crown though not its intricate details. Located on the busy thoroughfare, the al-Kazim Towers perform as architectural signage, visible from the Dubai Marina to the Dubai World Trade Center. They quote the New York landmark, while becoming landmarks in their own right, in terms of design as well as political significance.

The skyscraper harks back to the early years of the twentieth century, with architectural practice embracing modernity and its own autonomy. Artists and architects at that time rendered the skyscraper within the context of a heroic, if sometimes apocalyptic, urban environment, where technological advances gave rise to the impossible scaling of heights.[31] The al-Kazim Towers thus simultaneously call to mind the optimism of early twentieth-century American industry and the utopian imaginings of modern architecture.

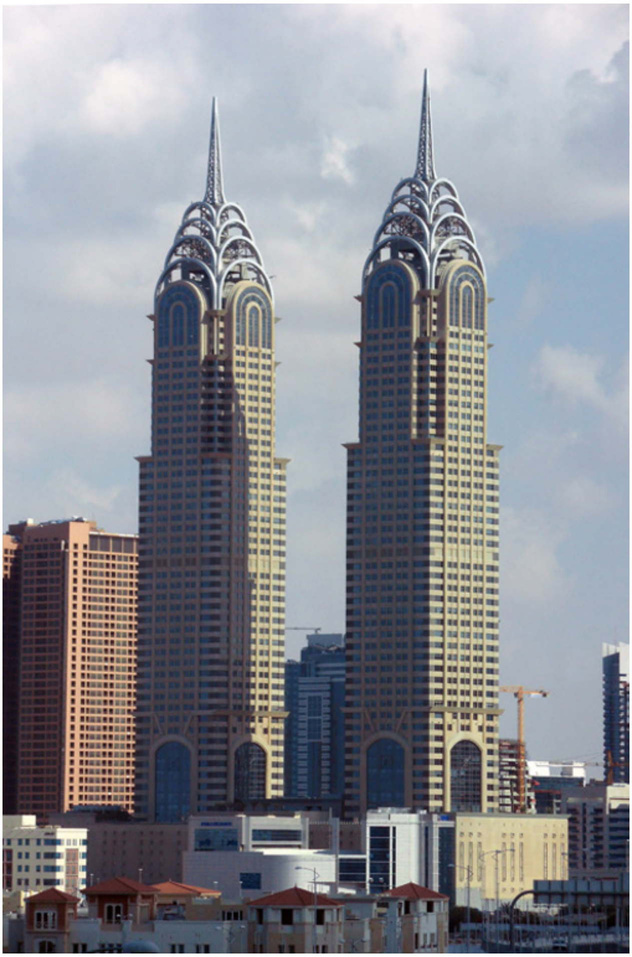

FIGURE 48.4 Al-Kazim Towers, National Engineering Bureau (NEB), 2008.

If one is to take seriously the contention that the rulers of Dubai dreamed of making the city the financial capital of the world one day, it is no surprise that its urban iconography utilizes the vertical ambitions embodied in the skyscraper. The Burj Khalifa, formerly the Burj Dubai, actualized their ambitions while also paying homage to the history of the skyscraper itself (Figure 48.5). The building is named in honor of Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, the President of the United Arab Emirates, and is owned by Emaar Properties. Adrian Smith, at the time a principal at SOM in Chicago, designed the skyscraper, which was inaugurated in 2010. At 828 m (approximately 2717 feet), the building is currently the tallest in the world and comprises hotel and residential suites, corporate offices, and observation decks with expansive views of the Gulf and the Arabian Desert. The tri-lobed foundation base was inspired by the Hymenocallis, a flowering

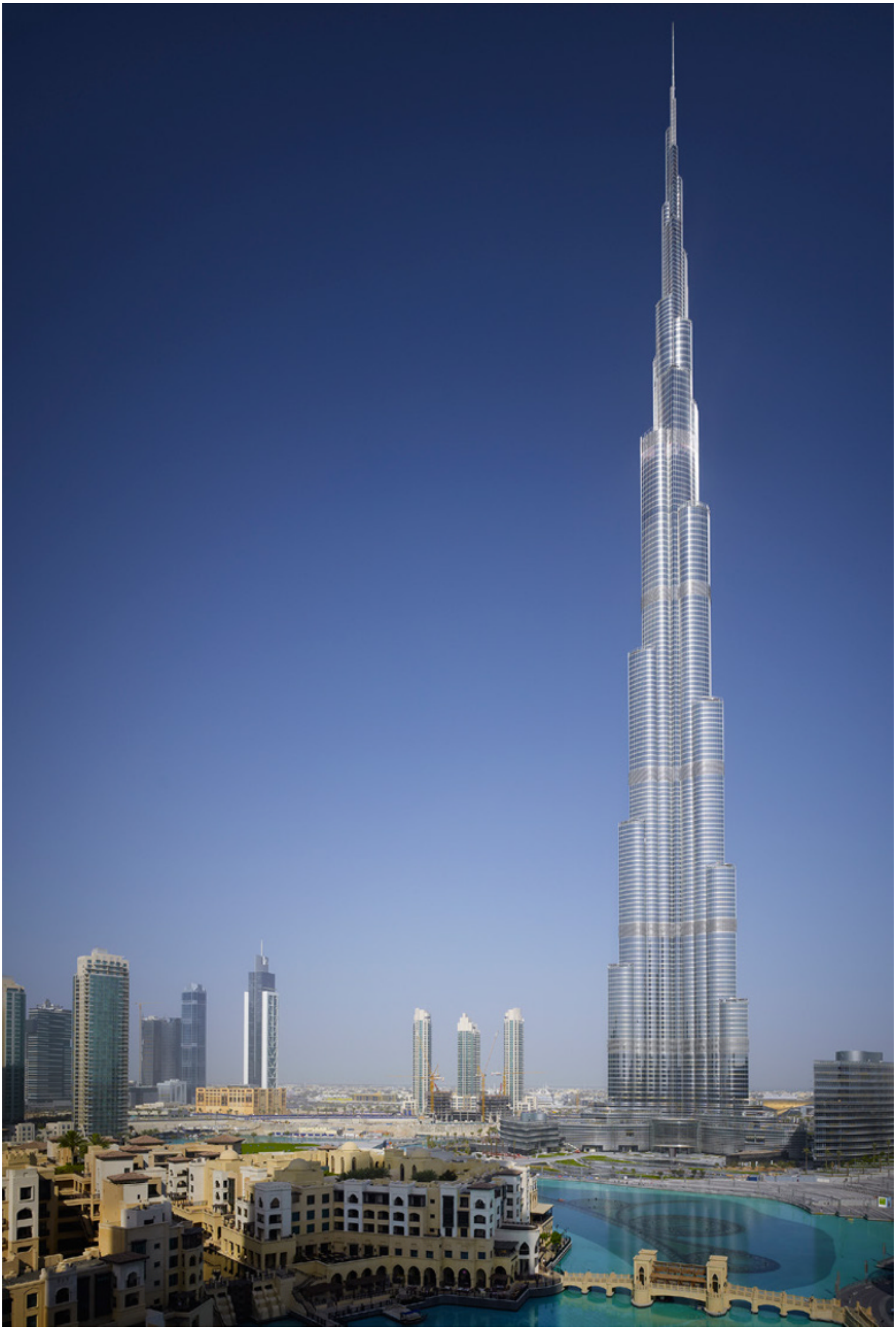

Figure 48.5 Burj Khalifa, Adrian Smith with Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill, 2010. Source: Photo courtesy of SOM, Nick Merrick/Hedrick Blessing. Reproduced with permission.

desert plant, a reference once again tying the indigenous with the international. The Y-shaped floor plans give maximum wall space to the interiors, and provide the setbacks necessary for the tower to extend skyward. The curtain wall is achieved through the use of aluminum-framed hand-cut glass panels on a steel structural armature.[32]

The concept of the building is stated on its web site:

> More than just the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa is an unprecedented example of international cooperation, symbolic beacon of progress, and an emblem of the new, dynamic and prosperous Middle East. It is also tangible proof of Dubai's growing role in a changing world. In fewer than 30 years, this city has transformed itself from a regional centre to a global one. This success was not based on oil reserves, but on reserves of human talent, ingenuity and initiative. Burj Khalifa embodies that vision.[33]

The building thus symbolizes Dubai's ambitions to be a global city and a technocratic and progressive society.

SOM's design for Burj Khalifa is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's 1956 Mile High Tower, a project never built but often reproduced. Like the Burj Khalifa, the foundations of the Mile High Tower are splayed out to maximize its stability, and the floors are set back as the tower ascends such that it culminates in a fine needle on top. Wright was famously antagonistic to urban living, building most of his iconic buildings in natural landscapes. As one author wrote, "Wright despised the commercial world and its representation in the skyscraper city. The city of towers was not, to Wright, a tenable answer to centralization" (Mostoller 1985: 17). Viewing Burj Khalifa through such a critique calls into question the exuberant positivism expressed by its builders, even as it points to the visionary and utopian dreams of modern architects over the past 100 years.

Dubai's architecture intersects with history in important and complex ways, from constructing an idealized Islamic past, or displaying an indigenous ethnology, to building a prophetic modernist future. Examples such as those considered here highlight the transregional and transhistorical trends that define architecture, religion, and statehood not only in this emirate in particular but in the contemporary Middle East in general. What is at stake in all cases is the issue of history, whether in terms of global corporate design or the local heritage industry as conceived through nationalist projects. Such an intellection provides important insights into the regenerative nature of contemporary architectural practice, which views modernism as a work in progress that picks up references and reuses them in creative ways. It is a modernism that celebrates the historical significance of its own making. If we expand that notion, we could say that Dubai's primary engagement is with modernity in a manner that is clearly not limited by geographic or national boundaries. Rather, this version of modernity is and continues to be a shared prospect, with its anxieties as well as its possibilities.

Notes

1 http://www.emaar.com/index.aspx?page=about, (accessed 3 February 2017).

2 The Gulf Cooperation Council is a confederation of states, comprising the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait. The Council was founded in 1981 with a goal of increasing economic and political interaction between these Arab countries.

3 He revised his position in "Dubai: From Judgment to Analysis," at the Sharjah Biennial in March, 2011; http://oma.eu/lectures/dubai-from-judgment-to-analysis (accessed 3 February 2017). In appearing to address the criticism poured on architects such as himself in the wake of the 2008 economic crash, Koolhaas puts the burden on "analysis" and "scientific" solutions, and other neo-colonialist rhetoric.

4 For a critique of Koolhaas see Lacayo 2008: 56.

5 A 2011 survey by the Dubai Statistics Center showed that in urban areas Emiratis make up 3.6 percent of the population, with 87 percent Asians, 6 percent other Arabs, and 2 percent Europeans; https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html (accessed 3 February 2017). A 1982 survey gives overall demographics in which Emiratis constitute 19 percent of the population, other Arab and Iranian 23 percent, South Asian 50 percent, other expatriates (includes Westerners and East Asians) 8 percent; https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ae.html (accessed 3 February 3, 2017).

6 Each of the Emirates has different social norms and restrictions; for example, whereas Dubai has relatively loose alcohol consumption laws, Abu Dhabi prohibits alcohol entirely.

7 A brief overview of Shaykh Rashid's patronage is given in Kay 1999.

8 Egyptian politics have played an important part in the Emirates since at least the 1950s, when supporters of Gemal Abdul Nasser asserted Arab nationalism and socialism as foundations for change in the Gulf. Indeed throughout the twentieth century, Egyptian teachers, doctors, and engineers helped build the infrastructure in the United Arab Emirates.

9 http://www.dubaicity.com/What_to_see_in_dubai/Jumeirah-Mosque.htm (accessed 3 February 2017). This is the official city guide, promoted by the Government of Dubai Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing.

10 Interview with the General Manager, Mr. Samir al-Shabani, in December 2008.

11 http://www.dubaicity.com/What_to_see_in_dubai/Jumeirah-Mosque.htm (accessed 3 February 2017).

12 A foundation panel at the entrance attributes the construction to the engineers Abd al-Moiz Husayn and Muhammad al-Mahdi Hijazi, Cairo – Dubai – Abu Dhabi, dated 1413/1996.

13 Identity is far from static, but it is mutable. Thus if in the 1970s the United Arab Emirates sought to assert "Arab" imperial authority, it may be argued that by the 2000s this identity gave way to a more neo-capitalist stance.

14 http://www.dubaicity.com/dubai-ibn-battuta-mall-dubai/(accessed 3 February 2017).

15 For a sociological comparison of Las Vegas and Dubai, see Schmid 2006.

16 The literature on the rise of museums is too extensive to itemize here, but among the earliest studies were by anthropologists such as James Clifford (1988) and Annie E. Coombes (1988).

17 In a recent book, Yasser Elsheshtawy focuses on the forgotten neighborhoods and by extension, the expatriate residents of Dubai. In areas such as Satwa, migrant workers lived within what the author has termed an "urban kaleidoscope." Such sites are now undergoing gentrification and the original blue-collar population is replaced by young residents longing for a semblance of authenticity in an otherwise seemingly banal city (Elsheshtawy 2010).

18 For a regional comparison, see Exell and Rico 2013.

19 This part of eastern Dubai is also known as Deira, and was the old downtown of the city.

20 The first bank to be set up in Dubai was the Imperial Bank of Iran, in 1948. Its name soon changed to the British Bank of Iran then the British Bank of the Middle East. The first National Bank of Dubai was established in the 1960s (Davidson 2008: 97–98).

21 The original home for this building was the Dubai National Bank. Since its merger with Emirates Bank in 2007, the Emirates DNB is the largest banking group in the Middle East. The current chairman is Shaykh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum. http://www.emiratesnbd.com/en/aboutEmiratesNBD (accessed 3 February 2017).

22 http://www.emiratesnbd.com/en/aboutEmiratesNBD/index.cfm (accessed 3 February 2017).

23 Before being commissioned to build in the United Arab Emirates, he designed the Opéra Bastille in Paris in 1987 (Biasini 1991). See also the architect's interview with Emma Sanguinetti (2008).

24 http://200.124.202.19/ott/ott.html (accessed 12 October 2008; no longer accessible).

25 http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=108 (accessed 3 February 2017).

26 Similarly, the Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club is a freestanding structure designed by Brian Johnson and built in 1993 to look like the sails of a dhow.

27 This comparison has been noted by Simon Glynn, http://www.galinsky.com/buildings/nbd/index.htm (accessed 3 February 2017). For a recent discussion of Lever House and the Seagram Building, see Scott 2011.

28 This was also the period of the Hilton hotels, which were seen as proselytizing American political and cultural values, see Wharton 2001.

29 For example, the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur (1998), Shanghai World Financial Center (2008), and Taipei 101 (2004).

30 Such imitation is also witnessed in the design of the National Bank of Abu Dhabi, which references the Citicorp building in New York City, also designed by Hugh Stubbins.

31 The drawings of Hugh Ferris (d. 1962) were particularly inspirational. See, for example, Ferriss 1929.

32 Extensive design and construction details are provided on the web site of the building: http://www.burjkhalifa.ae/en/the-tower/structures.aspx (accessed 3 February 2017).

33 http://www.burjkhalifa.ae/en/the-tower/vision.aspx (accessed 3 February 2017).

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49

Translations of Architecture in West Asia during the Twentieth Century

Esra Akcan

> *Today, we are still waiting for miracles from foreign artists. Meanwhile, we don't fail to give a hard time to Turkish architects for not being able to create a national architecture.*
>
> Mortaş 1941: 115

The sense of discomfort over the "foreign architect" in Abidin Mortaş's 1941 statement is indicative of a common mood that exposes some of the struggles of modernism throughout the twentieth century in countries exemplified in this chapter. Mortaş – a well-known architect and co-editor of the foremost professional journal *Arkitekt* in Turkey during the Republican period (1923 onwards) – was one of the many who expressed both excitement and doubt over the ubiquity of buildings designed by "foreign architects." This common term itself requires scrutiny, as it will reveal some of the explanatory limits of art historical categories, including "Islamic art and architecture" in its reified form (see Watenpaugh, CHAPTER 47).

Over the last years, scholars have held thought-provoking discussions about the integration of modern and contemporary periods into the field of Islamic art and architecture. Their previous exclusion may be justified because of the limits of a religion-based art historical category in coming to terms with the secular artworks of the modern times; or the fact that modernism dismantles the explanatory power of some of the established categories in the field that have been shaped in relation to earlier periods. Moreover, countries now established on lands covered by the field of Islamic art and architecture are usually excluded from the

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established surveys and periodicals of the modern and contemporary as well. Sibel Bozdoğan (1999), Finbarr Barry Flood (2007), and Gülru Necipoğlu (2012) have alerted the field to the double marginalization of non-Western modern art and architectures, as they are persistently excluded from the study of both Islamic and modern architecture.[1] However, these modalities of knowledge production create several obstacles. On the one hand, the exclusion of recent periods from the field of Islamic art and architecture blocks the opportunities for equally significant studies on modern and contemporary architecture to find an art historical home where they can truly flourish. On the other hand, it generates the perception of an exaggerated gap between pre-modern and modern periods, thereby helping to perpetuate the Orientalist understanding of modernity as an exclusively Western phenomenon. What seems necessary is more dialogue between the studies on several parts of the world in all periods, and hence the rethinking of current geographical and religious categories that are used in the field.

The anxiety over the "foreign architect" expressed above may be the symptom of a similar division between the West and non-West as essentially separate cultures. It may indeed be the same assumption that both creates the unease over bringing in "Western" forms into a "non-Western" country, and that excludes the study of other modernisms from art and architectural history – namely, the assumption that the world is divided into a few self-contained cultures, and that modernity was an exclusively European and North American invention which was disseminated to the rest of the world and thereby erased other art and architectural cultures (or at least rendered them unworthy of art historical study). Such a conception treats modern architectures around the world as derivatives of Western modernism, failing to come to terms with the global dimensions of modernity.

Upon closer examination, however, there is enough evidence to rewrite the past in a much more intertwined way by foregrounding cross-geographical conversations, even though the West and the East have been perceived and constructed as separate entities within an ongoing process of hybridization. Simultaneously, it seems necessary to think about theories and concepts that will help us come to terms with these intertwined histories, rather than use self-contained dichotomies between the foreign and the national, the Western and the Islamic. In my own work, I have offered the concept of translation as a step in this direction, and proposed a way to understand the global circulation of culture that extends the notion of translation beyond language to visual fields (Akcan 2005, 2012). Similarly, translation has also proven to be a useful lens through which complex artifacts in the pre-modern world at the intersection of multiple cultural traditions can be analyzed (e.g., Flood 2009: 5–9, 179–184; Necipoğlu 2012b: 1–81). In this chapter, I would like to extend that discussion by analyzing examples of translational modern architecture in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and some Gulf States throughout the twentieth century. As I hope will be clear with the examples below, "foreign" architects, foreign-educated nationals, and their dialogue with the citizens significantly shaped the modern architectures in these countries.

Bi- and multilateral international transportation of people, ideas, objects, technology, information, and images generates processes of change that I define as translation – a term I find accessible since it is a common experience whether one has translated between two languages, mediums, or places. Translation takes place under any condition where there is a cultural flow from one place to another. It is the process of transformation during the act of transportation. These translations have been so ubiquitous during the modern times that one can hardly think of any pure "local" architecture that is produced at a place completely closed to other locations, or pure "global" building produced at some abstract space outside the forces of any local condition. It is rather the diverse types of continuous translations that have shaped and are still shaping history, putting definitions of the local and the foreign under perpetual mutation. Drawing from the rich history of lingual translation (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999; Benjamin 1968; Derrida 1985, 1992; Munday 2008; Niranjana 1992; Spivak 1993; Venuti 1995, 2000), this theory treats *lingual translation* as a conceptual metaphor for *architectural translation*, while also differentiating the specificities of architectural practices. It simultaneously challenges the conventional and stereotypical understanding of translation as a second-hand imitation where the "original" gets lost, and as a neutral "bridge between cultures." It develops a terminology to allow for consideration of the sociopolitical context in globalization studies, and of the multiple agents in a given encounter.

Translation manifests an openness to the foreign, despite the different levels of domestication, appropriation, and resistance that might take place during the process. The inverted value invested in the foreign as a potentially rejuvenating force, rather than a threat, differentiates this theory from nationalist positions, as well as current notions of a "clash of civilizations." Nonetheless, I simultaneously demystify the idea of translation as a neutral bridge, since translations have not been devoid of the geographical distribution of capital or power. They have been neither smooth nor egalitarian, and hence need to be analyzed for both their liberating and colonizing forces. Avoiding passive metaphors of recent studies such as export, transfer, influence, or dissemination that deny agency to the receiving locations, translation observes the contribution of multiple agents in any interaction. This differentiates it from narratives that emphasize exclusively Western agency, and thereby allows for the historiography of the global. Finally, going beyond indistinct and broad concepts such as hybridity and cross-cultural encounter, this work observes that artifacts of circulation have been *translated*, yet this is not where the scope of theory ends but where it begins, because translation as a field of study calls for a richer terminology that expands the restricted vocabulary of existing studies. In my own work, I have attempted to develop one such terminology to allow for the consideration of different items, channels, types, places, agents, ideologies, and qualities of cultural encounters, and offered concepts such as foreignizing and appropriating translations, convictions about translatability and untranslatability, translation as a contested zone, translation for the sake of hybridity and for the sake of cosmopolitan ethics. I have advocated a new culture of translatability from below and in multiple directions for a truly cosmopolitan ethics and global justice.

In this chapter, I bring forward what might be called the *translation movements* in Turkey in the 1930s and 1940s, Iraq and Lebanon in the 1950s, Kuwait in the 1970s, and the Gulf cities in the 2000s. Unlike the colonial and mandate periods, what distinguishes the translation movements discussed in this chapter is their initiation through invitation. It was not the imperialist states or mandates who used architecture as an efficient tool to make colonial societies – although this is also a case of translation – but the sovereign governments and authorities in these countries themselves who invited professionals from different territories, even though the resulting process was not always free from colonial fantasies and latent imperial imagination. Proceeding from the interwar period, through the Cold War until the global present, and focusing specifically on a few cases, the chapter is divided into three sections. Each of these identifies a different construction – the national, the regional, and the Islamic – as what I argue has stood for the locus of perceived identity to translate from or be translated into.

Translations into the National: The New World after World War I

Founding the Republic of Turkey in 1923 in the aftermath of World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Kemalist state invited numerous experts from the German-speaking ally countries to assist in the construction of the country's modern cities, buildings, and architectural schools (Akcan 2005, 2012; Akcan and Bozdoğan 2012; Bozdoğan 2001; Nicolai 1998). As contradictory as this may seem in the context of the passionate nationalism of the times, the early Republican officials commissioned exclusively foreign architects to design their representative buildings. In the first decade, most of the architects designed their projects for Turkey while they remained based in their home country. Their visions were meant to infiltrate the lives of the nation from the largest to the smallest scale. Hermann Jansen (d. 1945) applied the prewar garden city model, which itself developed in Germany as a result of translation from the United Kingdom, not only in the master plan of the capital, Ankara, but all over the country. The same model was used in collective housing neighborhoods for the new statesmen, and in residential villages to locate immigrants arriving after the exchange of populations with the Balkans. All governmental and higher education buildings in the new capital Ankara were commissioned from German and Austrian architects, such as Robert Oerley, Clemens Holzmeister, Ernst Egli, Bruno Taut, and Paul Bonatz. Individual houses for the new leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (president 1923–1938) and other official elites, designed most notably by Holzmeister and Seyfi Arkan, who had just returned from Berlin, disseminated the desire for flat roofs rather than pitched ones, plain stucco façades rather than constructive ornamental patterns, transparent surfaces rather than wooden shutters, winter gardens rather than courtyards, fashionable modern furniture items rather than built-in divans. However, even in the most obvious examples of the official Westernization program, the results were never a direct copy of what happened in German modernism but significantly translated visions. Meanwhile, a group of authors and architects in Istanbul initiated an alternative path to modern architecture through both an open agenda of translation and a productively melancholic appreciation of the existing wooden houses in the city.

The German–Turkish connection intensified after the National Socialist regime came to power in 1933, which forced many German architects and planners into exile, including Ernst Reuter, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, Bruno Taut, and Martin Wagner. The German nationals in Turkey occupied an array of intellectual and political positions. While some like Paul Bonatz promoted National Socialism's classical monumental architecture, others who had themselves fled from the regime, actively fought against this propaganda in Turkey. Most of these architects took part in the new generation's education and collaborated with local professionals – a dialogue that made a lasting impact, which exceeded the period of their sojourns. It should be acknowledged that translations in the opposite directions from Turkey to Europe also existed, even if my intention here is to expose and criticize the asymmetry and inequality in modern encounters. While in Turkey, some German émigrés, including Ernst Reuter, outlined the future of postwar Germany and came to influential posts there afterwards; others like Ernst Egli returned to Switzerland and advocated a culture-specific theory of urban design. Such international exchanges in the early twentieth century mobilized by immigrants, exiles, travelers, international students, officials, and collaborating local architects significantly transformed the urban and architectural culture in Turkey, and reciprocally influenced the subsequent professional practice in Europe after the immigrants left Turkey.

Kemalist cultural politics can well be seen as demonstrating a confidence in the smooth translatability of European-ness into Turkey. Modernism itself may have had a certain conviction about its own translatability to the whole world so that its technical and social merits could be shared globally – a beautiful idea that attracted criticism when it was imposed with patronizing tendencies. At the same time, building a sovereign nation-state out of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire simultaneously demanded the revival of some "cultural roots." Among the constructed categories of national heritage, the "old Turkish house" (*eski Türk* evi) served as the most common marker of architectural identity during this period, partly because unlike Ottoman monuments it was imagined to be authentically Turkish by virtue of being built by the "common people." The regional, ethnic, and religious differences in vernacular houses around Turkey were overlooked for the construction of this unified category. The prominent Turkish architect Sedad Eldem (d. 1988) (Bozdoğan, Özkan, and Yenal 1987; Tanyeli and Tanju 2008–2009) built his career on researching, defining, and continuously reinterpreting the old Turkish house (Eldem 1955, 1984–1987). Yet his ideas were never shaped insularly but at each instance formed in a moment of translation, such as his three-year long travel in Europe during his formative years, and collaborations with the German architect Paul Bonatz as well as the US firm SOM (Akcan 2005, 2012). One of Eldem's most recognized buildings Taşlık Coffee House in Istanbul (1947–1948, Figure 49.1) was admittedly based on the Köprülü Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa waterfront house on the Bosphorous in Istanbul (*c.* 1700), but like many of his early houses, he drew the first inspiration sketches for this building during his study-trip in Europe where he was constanly negotiating between and hybridizing Europan modernism and the old Turkish houses.

The building extends over a retaining wall with a large projection bay and wide eaves. The **T**-plan composed of three identical bays was a recognizable element of

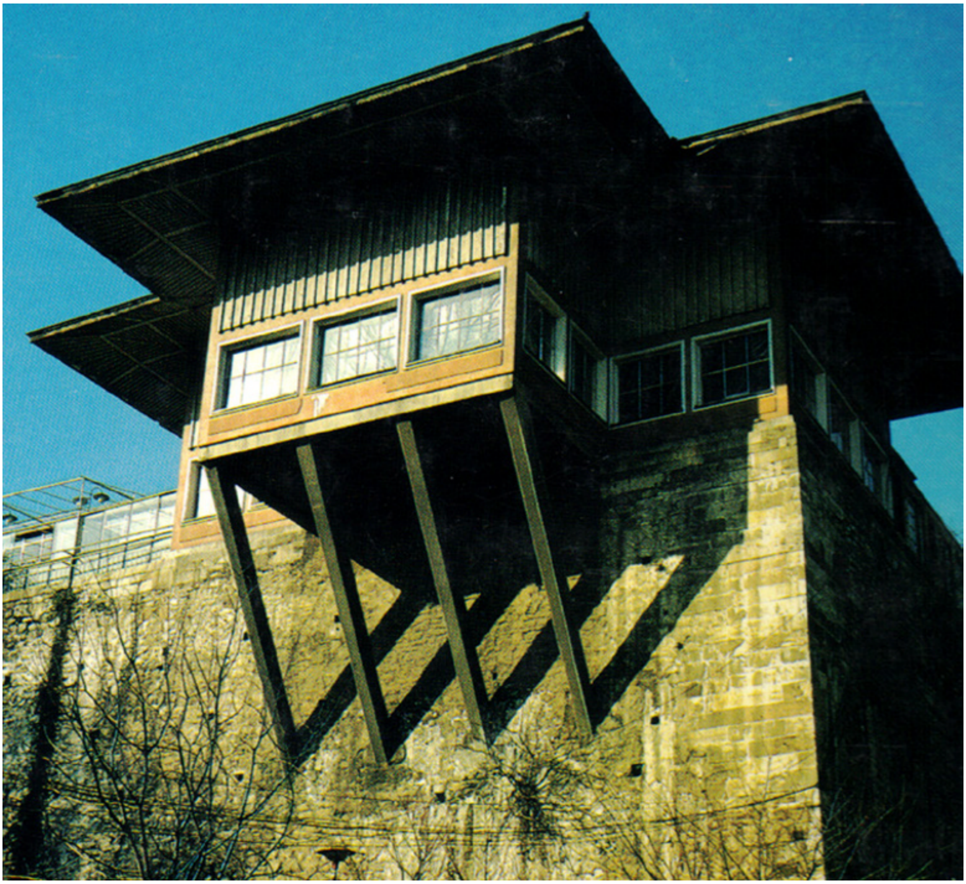

FIGURE 49.1 Sedad Eldem, Taşlık Coffee House, Istanbul, Turkey, 1947–1948. Source: Süha Özkan. Reproduced with permission.

traditional Istanbul houses, enabling maximum fenestration on a given span. Eldem made the most use of this possibility by encircling all the edges of the **T**-plan with continuous horizontal windows that let the light and a panoramic Bosphorous view inside. In his mind, this was a confirmation of the existing hints of modernism in the old Turkish houses, given the Swiss/French architect Le Corbusier's (d. 1965) emphasis on the horizontal window as one of the five principles of modern architecture, and the US architect Frank Lloyd Wright's (d. 1959) declaration that his source of inspiration was the flat prairie. The building also stands out for its extensive use of wood, including the timber beams pretending to buttress the concrete cantilever, the exterior woodwork, and built-in wooden furniture. For Eldem, this structural lightness not only alluded to the timber frames of traditional houses but also made the new building compatible with European modernism. It was precisely this claim to compatibility, namely the claim of the modernness of the Turkish house and the Turkishness of modernism in Europe and the United States that helped Eldem resolve the dilemma of modernization in Turkey. This dilemma was initiated by the simultaneous desire to be part of the "Western civilization" and to establish a national identity that would avoid being "absorbed by the West," as the challenge was commonly characterized in Turkey. Eldem must have made himself believe that the old Turkish houses were not untranslatable to Western modernism. Perhaps this was a tactic to subvert the perceived inequalities between places, which obstruct some translation theories' humanist aspirations. The humanist ideal – the faith in the universality of cultures – enabled Eldem to avoid both exoticist conclusions that would have searched for the essential difference in the East and cultural supremacist ones that would have seen no value in anything but European modernism.

Among the invited architects, the German exile Bruno Taut's practice in Turkey deserves a closer look precisely because he complicated and in some cases subverted the dominant Western/national dichotomy. In the Faculty of Language, History and Geography in Ankara (1937), Taut used stones and tiles with different colors, roughness, and tactile qualities, unlike the modernist buildings of the period with stucco surfaces devoid of texture or ornament. On the exterior, he treated the front façade as a hard skin of stones and bricks interwoven by the system of composite masonry (*almaşık*) – a traditional way of stone binding associated with Seljuq and early Ottoman communal buildings. He highlighted his intentions by designing subtle transformations from the stone of the front façade to the stucco of the side façade, refined joint details between the stones and the window frames, specially designed gutters and lamps, curved surfaces and expressive handrail details. Taut used a specific window detail with sun-shading beams placed at mid-height to both protect the interior from excessive sun on the eye-level, and let light into the building from above – a detail admittedly inspired from the "old Turkish houses" (Bozdoğan 1997; Taut 1938a).

Freed from classical plan conceptions, the main hall inside this building was designed as a collection of spaces within spaces with framed perspectives, where

Taut differentiated the smooth surfaces of ceilings from the textured surfaces of walls. Judging from the references to traditional construction techniques and constructive ornament, some have claimed that Taut was an advocate of nationalism; whereas the architect's own intentions as formulated in a number of books and essays written both in Japan and Turkey (1936, 1937, 1938a,b), most notably his last book *Mimari Bilgisi* (Lectures on Architecture; 1938b) published in Turkish (and later translated into German) might be better identified as a Kantian cosmopolitan call to architects (Akcan 2012). Based on his experiences in Japan and Turkey, Taut insightfully observed modernism's basic dilemma outside Europe as the swing between the "slavish imitation of foreign styles" and "uninspired" nativism. His writing and buildings were meant as critical strategies to resist these two unproductive tendencies, without either closing a country to foreign sources or uncritically accepting them. Taut criticized those who rejected foreign inspirations, yet advocated translations that would be "no false Internationalism, no uniformalization of the world, no dullification of the whole earth" but a hybridization that would "make both sides richer" (Taut 1936: 206). Taut further extended this cosmopolitan call by opening Turkey to translations from "the East," as was illustrated in his own house that translated architectural traditions from Japan. In a country such as Turkey at the time, wide open to influences from its West but closed to the ones from its East, and from the diverse ethnic and religious groups within its own borders, such an opening to Japan was an unordinary and critical gesture.

Translations into the Regional: Cold-War Balances

A series of changes took place in West Asia after World War II due to the weakening power of the war-torn European countries. The British presence in Iraq during the mandate period (1915–1932) following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire had made a durable mark on architecture. Most notably, James Mollison Wilson (assistant of Edwin Lutyens in the creation of colonial New Delhi, 1912–1930) and Harold Mason had designed all of the major governmental and civic buildings until 1935, including the Memorial Hospital in Basra (1921) and the Basra Airport (1931), and had continued to exert their influence well into the 1950s with such important landmarks as the Baghdad Railway Station (1947–1951) (Crinson 2003; Pieri 2014). With the steep increase in oil revenues as a result of the 1951 agreement that diminished British profits, a comprehensive translation movement in architecture took place, which differed from the mandate period, at least on paper, by virtue of the fact that it was initiated through invitations by the Iraqi government. Not unlike Ankara, Baghdad became a center of modern town planning and architecture carried out by foreign offices. Throughout the 1950s, the Iraq Development Board invited architects based mainly in the United States or with close ties to it, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Josep Lluís Sert, and Constantinos Doxiadis; nonetheless other world talents such as Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto also contributed (Bernhardsson 2008; Fethi 1985; Frampton and Khan 2000; Nooraddin 2004). Wright's unrealized Oriental fantasy to build a new Baghdad as *A Thousand and One Nights* city (1955–1958) (Marefat 1999); Le Corbusier's Sports Complex made out of exposed reinforced concrete with a curved swooping roof, playful ramps of different widths and carved-in Modulor reliefs (now Saddam Hussain Gymnasium, 1956–1980); and Gropius and TAC's University of Baghdad, originally envisioned as a compound of 273 buildings, with an unexpectedly abundant use of domes, arches, and arcades (1958–1970), make it hard to find a stylistic unity or a common choice between appropriating or foreignizing tendencies in this translation movement. Nonetheless, many architects were interested in a climate-specific architecture and a regionalist foundation for their buildings. The invention of a new modern vocabulary with sun-protected surfaces and outdoor spaces, brise soleil, courtyards, and umbrella roofs testify to this commitment to climate as the marker of identity during the translation process. In short, it was the existing and novel climate-specific forms that provided the repertoire for transformation during the translation process.

Examples include the German architect Walter Gropius, then at Harvard University, who designed cantilevered roofs and floor slabs to maximize shaded surfaces underneath, and lifted the buildings above ground to provide sun-protected outdoor spaces. But let me focus here on the Catalan architect then also at Harvard University, Josep Lluís Sert, who described his US Embassy building in Baghdad (1955–1960) as a response to climatic constrains, including excessive sun, heat, and aridity that he considered "nature-given" hence "eternal" identifiers of a region. The complex was composed of the embassy's office building (chancery), the ambassador's residence, and the staff's apartment building, all unified with a translated modernist taste in a landscaped oasis garden that was encircled by high walls, and contained a dyke and an irrigation canal as a metaphoric extension of the Tigris River. The chancery building (Figure 49.2) was organized around a cooling courtyard (an element in Baghdad's traditional houses) and made up of three floors that stepped back with cantilevered slabs to provide shades for the façades below. The brise soleil surfaces, also a favorite form of sun protection and ventilation for Oscar Niemeyer in Brasilia (1960) and Le Corbusier in Chandigarh (1951–), were designed as two kinds of screens, one as white ceramic tiles, the other as metal louvers. There was a double roof made up of a folded concrete slab like an outer umbrella which allowed air circulation in between, protected the inner roof from excessive sun, and channeled the downpour through its folds. The extensive use of concrete in addition to local tiles was in line with the Iraq Development Board's decision to boost the concrete industry in an otherwise brick-rich Iraq. The historian Samuel Isenstadt (1997) interpreted this building complex as part of Eisenhower's US embassies program, and hence a balancing act during the Cold War, which entailed distinguishing the

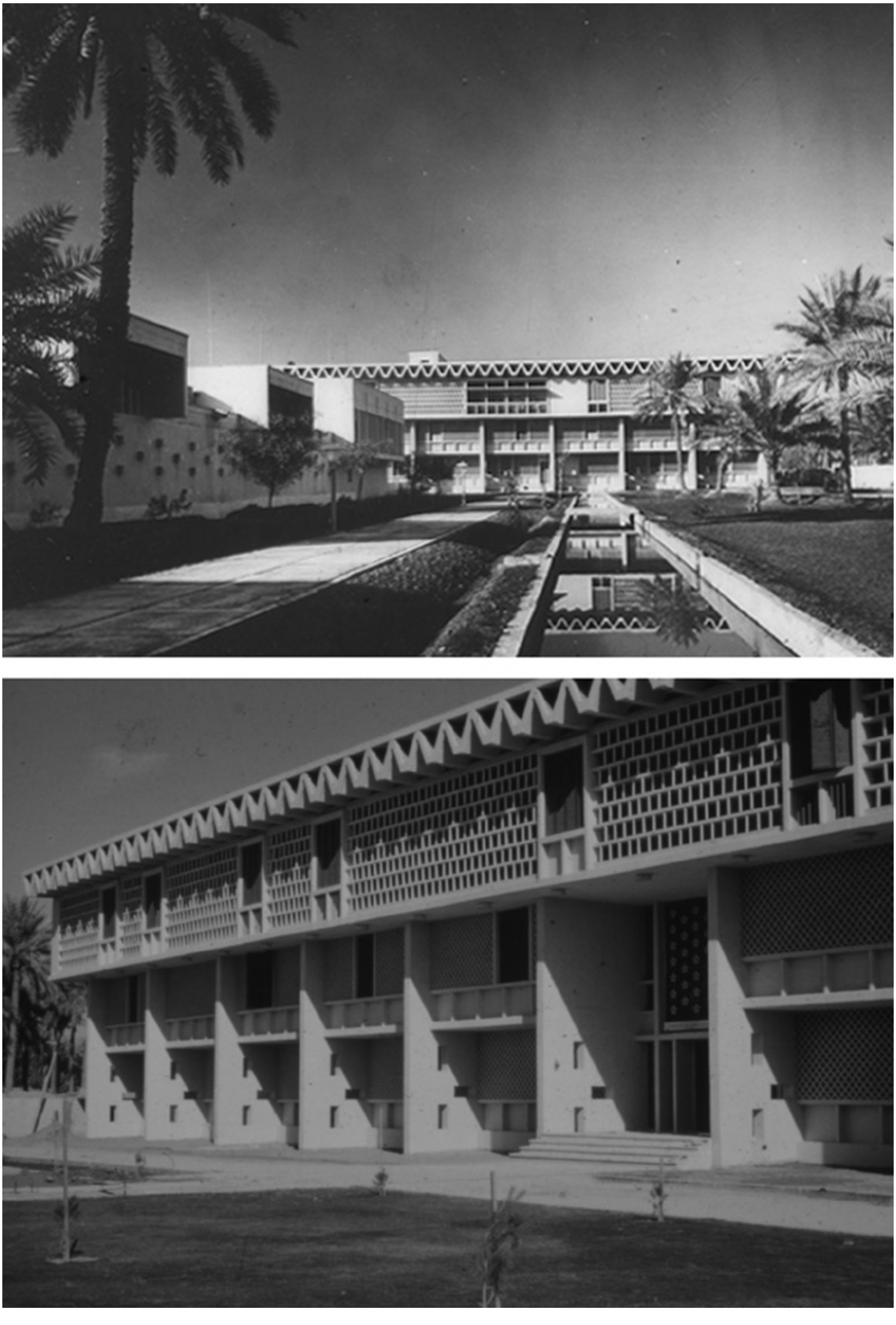

FIGURE 49.2 Josep Lluís Sert, The chancery building of the US Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq, 1955–1960. Source: Josep Lluís Sert Collection. Courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University. Reproduced with permission.

United States from the rival Soviet Union while simultaneously distancing it from the memories of the mandate of Britain, a US ally, and exerting American soft-power in a manner that respected Iraq's new political independence by showing sensitivity to the local context. The translation of the early twentieth-century Western modern forms into a climatically appropriate building in Iraq also convinced the second-generation modernists such as Sert of the continuing relevance of their aspirations. In Isenstadt's words,

> That modern architecture could address so many different climatic conditions so handily served as further proof, at least to advocates, that it was still universally applicable … Attention to climate was thus a means of engaging the particular without foregoing the universal … The task for the second generation of modernists was to incorporate within modernism "unchangeable values" such as "those tied to man and climate." (Isenstadt 1997: 180)

In this particular case, the *translation* into the regional, namely the transportation of a set of formal principles from EuroAmerica to West Asia and their consequent transformation in relation to climatic concerns, served to maintain the perceived universality of modernism itself.

Another figure that sought to strike the balance between what were considered universal and regional during this time was Constantinos Doxiadis. Perhaps no other planner had as wide-ranging practice in the Middle East as the Greek architect Doxiadis, who developed master plans for Iraq (1954–1958), Syria (1958), and Lebanon (1958), upon the recommendation of the United States. The *New York Times* praised Doxiadis at the time for eliminating empty and lonely urban environments that made dwellers susceptible to communism (Pyla 2002: 63), and Hashim Sarkis (1998, 2003) recently interpreted his invitation to Lebanon as part of the US policy to intervene on different levels in the Middle East against the threat of communism. After the French occupation and mandate periods (1918–1946), Beirut became the banking center of an independent Lebanon in the 1950s, and accepted the Eisenhower doctrine in 1957. A translation movement with an intense construction period followed, which was disrupted by the war with Israel in 1967 and the civil war that lasted between 1975 and 1990. Referred to as the "golden age" by many historians and critics, the modernization program brought experts from many countries in addition to the United States. Oscar Niemeyer from Brazil worked on the unfinished Tripoli Fair; Le Corbusier's senior collaborator André Wogenscky designed the canonical Ministry of National Defense (1962–1968) in collaboration with the Lebanese architect Maurice Hindieh; while Michel Ecochard built schools, to list a few examples. In the historian Jad Tabet's (1998: 96) words, for the architects and planners of this period, "the political and social project seemed to indicate that it was possible to start afresh, to rebuild the world anew, and to rid Lebanese society once and for all of the detritus of 'dead old forms.'"

Doxiadis's master plans sought to rectify the typical urbanization problems of postwar cities, such as housing shortages due to mass immigration from rural areas, slum clearance, and traffic congestion. Yet, Doxiadis showed a heightened interest in researching the built settings, climatic conditions, and environmental characteristics of the region. Convinced of the power of *Ekistics*, "the science of human settlements," to "civilize" the world and provide the architecture of development, Doxiadis thought extensive visual surveys, scientific (i.e., empirically based) analyses, and candid diagnosis of present problems would deliver both universal progress and regional specificity. According to the scholar Panayiota I. Pyla (2002: 21, 57), "*Ekistics* proposed a corrective to Eurocentric modernism" and appealed to "post-colonial governments of the time [with] the promise that it would be more amenable to local cultural preferences." Doxiadis's "dual claim both to scientific legitimacy and cultural sensitivity" was attractive to the Iraqi government as well, while making him seem free of "imperial stigma" to use a term from his *New Yorker* profile (Pyla 2008: 100). Doxiadis delivered actual projects for model communities and their dwelling types. In his proposal for Baghdad, the house types with courtyards and concrete sun-breakers in place of traditional wooden screens made a claim to the scientific analysis of the local climate and existing architectural vocabulary, but as standardized abstractions, Pyla observed, they did not function as effectively as the climate-controlled spaces of traditional houses. The proposed neighborhood units for Baghdad included hammams, mosques, covered markets reminiscent of traditional souks, and most notably a "gossip square" – Hassan Fathy's idea – for a group of 10–15 houses as a substitute for traditional gathering places. The outcome of a collaboration between a Greek architect who was chosen by the Iraqi government as a result of American consultation and an Egyptian architect, the gossip square in Baghdad's model housing (bracketing its self-Orientalizing gender implications) stands as an explicit example of translational modern architecture with multinational agents.

Despite their claims to regional sensitivity, in the immediate aftermath of these translation movements foreign architects were criticized for imposing Western forms, both in Iraq and Lebanon. Even though the British mandate had technically come to an end, many considered the ongoing foreign presence in Iraq in the 1950s as a continuing legacy of the mandate, which may indicate that they sensed a latent imperial imagination in these translation movements, most of which were overseen by the United States. According to Ihsan Fethi (1985: 124), the 1950s was "a hasty experimental phase during which Iraqi architects abandoned their cultural roots in favor of catching up with the western bandwagon." It was these "cultural roots" that a new generation of architects and university professors including Mohamed Saleh Makiya, Rifat Chadirji, and Hisham A. Munir embraced in the 1970s, in a move interpreted by some critics as "the liberation from foreign influences" and "transcendence of the language of modern architecture" (Kulterman 1980: 54, 60). However, far from being isolated in an allegedly authentic culture, most of these architects were also translating from multiple locations and participating in the international discourse of the time, which leaned toward the appreciation of historical forms. Most notably, Chadirji (1986), who had worked with Le Corbusier during his early career and had collaborated with Doxiadis briefly, designed the memorable buildings of the country such as the Tobacco Monopoly Headquarters (Baghdad, 1965–1967), the Central Post Office (Baghdad, 1975), and the Hamood and Chadirji houses (Baghdad, 1972, 1979). Lebanese architectural culture was also characterized by a starker emphasis on cultural identity in the 1970s through the 1990s, as exemplified in the works of architects like Assem Salam and Jacques Liger-Belair (Tabet 1998).[2] Nonetheless, the increased use of regional and historical architectural references was not independent from the international and inter-Arabian architectural context leaning toward postmodern style at the time, and hence not closed to translation.

Simultaneously in the 1970s, the rise of Kuwait as an international power on the Gulf and the consequent building boom marked the beginning of another translation movement. Upon the suggestions of a multinational advisory committee, several internationally known architectural firms were invited to design landmark buildings. The list included Alison and Peter Smithson from Britain for research into climate, Candilis/Josic/Woods from France for residential neighborhoods, Kenzō Tange from Japan who designed the National Airport, Raili and Reima Pietilä from Finland who built the extension to the Sief Palace, Mohamed S. Makiya from Iraq for the design of the State Mosque, Malene Bjørn from Sweden for the now iconic Kuwait Towers, and two Danish architects, Arne Jacobsen for the design of the Central Bank and Jørn Utzon for the Parliament Building (Gardiner 1983), as well as architects from former Eastern Bloc countries, such as Poland.[3]

Completely white to accentuate the blue color of the Gulf Sea along which it is situated, Utzon's Parliament Building (1972–1983, Figure 49.3) is like a city-in-miniature that modernizes a traditional souk (Frampton 1996: 295; Weston 2002). Its square layout is composed of inner streets and two-story modules organized around courtyards that make up an architectural fabric out of which two technologically advanced tent-like structures arise expressively. Preoccupied with the idea of "additive architecture" at the time, Utzon combined both additive and monolithic features in the Kuwait Parliament Building by preparing the stage for new additions of modules if needed, while establishing a finished composition overall. The main spine extending between the city and the sea is a covered inner street that gives entrances to the different government departments in the modules on one side, and the main assembly hall on the other, while opening up at one end into the grand semi-open public space along the Gulf. This memorable space near the water breeze is covered with the swooping canopy, similar to the roof of the assembly hall, through which Utzon formulated his climate-based characterizations of the monarchic "Arab culture":

> The dangerously strong sunshine in Kuwait makes it necessary to protect yourself in the shade – the shade is vital for your existence – and this hall which provides shade

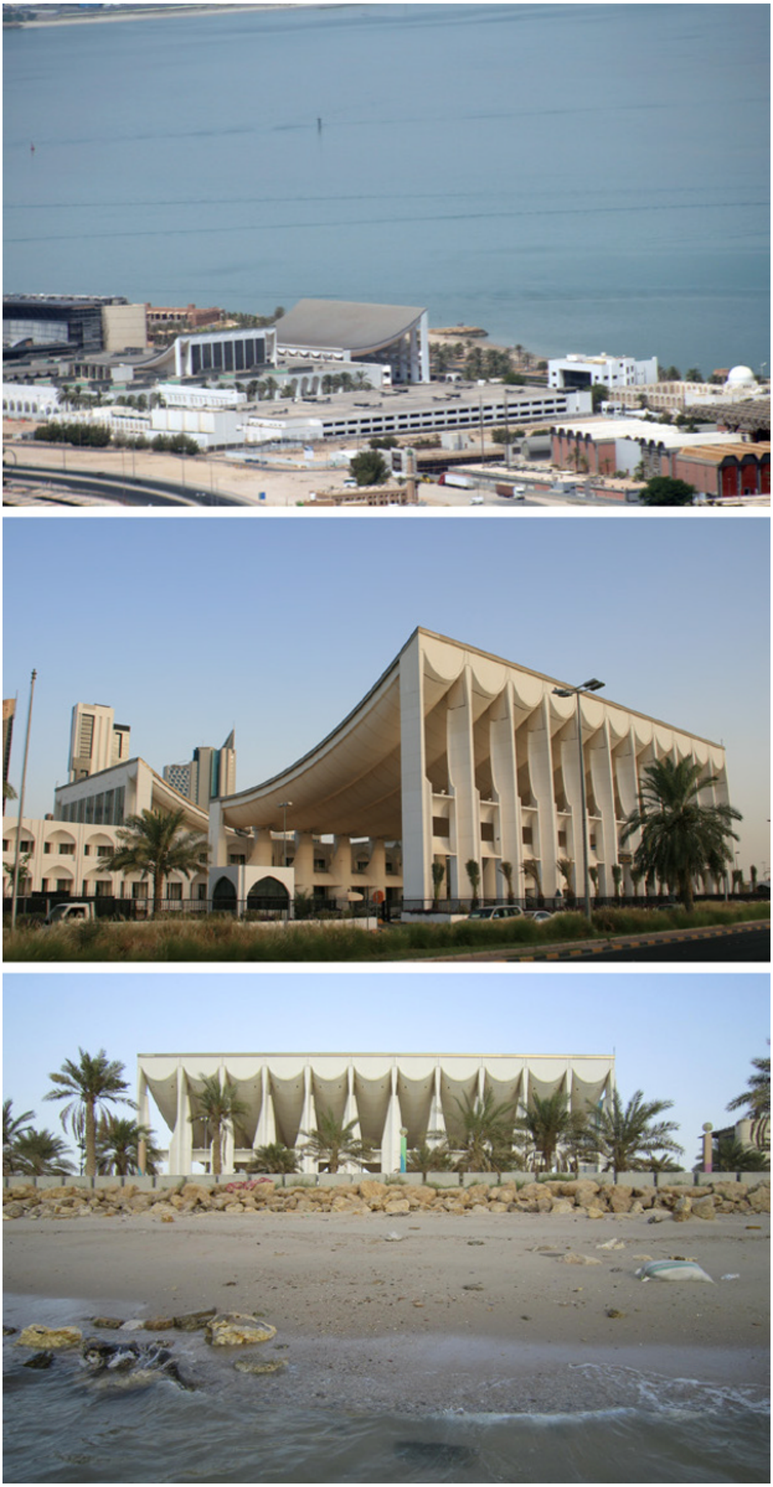

Figure 49.3 Jørn Utzon, Parliament Building, Kuwait City, Kuwait, 1972–1983. Source: Esra Akcan. Reproduced with permission.

> for the public meetings could perhaps be considered symbolic for the protection a ruler extends to his people. There is an Arab saying: "When a ruler dies, his shadow is lost." (Utzon, quoted in Frampton 1996: 296; Weston 2002: 327)

The main design-generating concept was hence sun protection, which was materialized with the introverted character of the complex, as well as the use of repetitive courtyards, covered inner streets, and tent metaphors. Moreover, the technological ambition to cover the large spans and high spaces of the assembly hall and the public plaza by using tapered round piers and prefabricated catenary vaulted beams (each weighs 500 tons) was meant to be a proof of the new Kuwait's progress. In Utzon's mind, the structurally honest tectonic expression in handling these advanced building parts "reflected the purity of Islamic construction."

Translations into the Islamic: Postmodern and Global Currents

"An Islamic symbol of the space age": this is how the contemporary architecture critic Stephen Gardiner (1983: 124) introduced the Kuwait Towers, inaugurated in 1977 (architect: Malene Bjørn, 1969–1976). Built as part of the city's new water delivery system – which also consists of 35 mushroom-shaped towers around the city – the pointed towers have an unassuming scale (140 m and 180 m high) and hold three spheres up in the air. They serve both as water reservoirs and the city's landmark on the shore projecting onto the Kuwait Bay. Built to become an iconic technological marvel comparable to the Eiffel Tower in Paris, but much more functional for the city's scarce water resources, the design relies on easily accessible metaphors that are nonetheless not common Orientalist tropes, such as traditional perfume bottles and shimmering blue mosaics. The spheres are covered with 41 000 blue, green, or gray enameled steel disks attached in a spiraling pattern (Frampton and Khan 2000). From a distance they shine and shimmer; while the rough texture made up of small circular disks can be closely viewed by looking across to the second tower from the restaurant and observatory tower placed in the sphere at the summit of the facing tower.

What I would like to observe additionally with these last two examples is the gradual shift from the category of the "regional" or "climate-specific" into a reconstructed category of the "Islamic" as the perceived identity-marker of architecture in translation. Addressing the Iranian Revolution in 1979, most political scientists have observed the rising attachments to Islam in many countries of North Africa and West Asia (Hourani, Khoury, and Wilson 2005). A simultaneous and perhaps independent shift in secular circles of architectural culture also took place that popularized "Islamic architecture" as the catch-all term to designate building practice in Middle Eastern countries, especially in European and North American publications and institutions. While the inception of the subfield of "Islamic art and architecture" dates back to the nineteenth-century European beginnings of art history as a discipline (see Watenpaugh, CHAPTER 47), it is interesting to observe how contemporary architects after the 1980s relied on this field's categories, which aligned them with the rise of postmodern architectural style around the world and the new interest in making references to historical buildings. In the 2000s, there has been a shift in the focus of minority studies from race and gender to religion, to counteract the stereotypical casting of Islam as a threat to "Western civilization." The relation between the shifts in the epistemology of cultural practice and the governmental control on academic or cultural institutions, if any, is too hard to excavate for those of us who are still living in this period, but it remains an open question yet to be explored.

After the 1980s, an increased emphasis on cultural identity motivated the design of buildings that integrated historical references more as symbols than as climate-control functions. Among the institutions that advocated modernization without detachment from cultural ties was the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA, first award cycle in 1980), which not only supported architects, communities, and institutions with bounteous monetary awards but also sought to promote knowledge about architecture in "Islamic countries." Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Aga Khan Award supported both canonical buildings by established or flourishing architects, and conservation projects as well as low-income housing (Serageldin 1997). For the former category, the AKAA often rewarded projects that dealt with the question of identity and those that were evaluated as balanced syntheses between modernity and tradition. In explaining the mission of the Foundation, its secretary Süha Özkan referred to the "failure" of modernism in the Islamic societies and in the Third World because its proponents ignored the "existence of the cultural values in the built environment, continuity between past and present, a sense of identity, consideration of climate and need for user (or community) participation" (Özkan 1994: 25). In the words of the prominent historian of Islamic art and architecture Oleg Grabar, "partly through the efforts and activities of the Aga Khan Award," it became possible to explore "notions of architectural identity, of reliance on native rather than imported practices and talents, of an ideologically significant rather than merely antiquarian past, of technologies appropriate to each task … of pride in accomplishments of the past of the lands on which one builds, of locally inspired rather than imported educational objectives in professional schools" (Grabar 1994: 7). With this trajectory set during the 1980s and 1990s, the Aga Khan Award effectively canonized the past work of Sedad Eldem, Rifat Chadirji, Hasan Fathy among other architects discussed above, and major projects by European and North American architects such as the Hajj Terminal in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia by the multinational team of the US firm SOM (1974–1982) – an unordinary airport that combines the tent typology and advanced technology to span large distances; the National Commercial Bank in Jeddah by Gordon Bunshaft of SOM (1977–1983) – one of the first climate-specific skyscrapers that integrated passive cooling techniques and historical references, and served as a model for SOM's future skyscrapers in West Asia; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh, by Henning Larsen (1980–1984) – a large complex with a fortress-like stone-clad exterior, ceremonial entrance, and a hierarchy of public and semi-private atriums, inner and outer courtyards, internal streets and semi-closed passageways.

Among the architects who anticipated the postmodern stylistic turn in international discourse by directing their attention to the "architectural heritage of Islam," the prolific architect Rasem Badran explained his own motivation as a correction to what he perceived as "the predominant alienation characterizing our cities and rendering the Arab a foreigner in his own land" (Hamdan 1987: 59; Steele 2005: 38–39). Throughout his career, the Jordanian architect has designed for Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jerusalem, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Yemen, and Egypt. Badran's sentiment against the "alienating" outcomes of foreign practices has indeed been a common criticism. To continue with Kuwait, the authorities' exclusive reliance on foreign architects did not pass without protest despite the appreciation of exceptional masterpieces, not unlike the situation in Turkey, Iraq, and Lebanon discussed above. In stark contrast to the celebratory words of commentators in the 1970s, according to the Kuwaiti architect Saleh al-Mutawa (1994), whose own practice essentializes what he observes as traditional Kuwaiti architecture, "the architects that came from abroad did not take the time to study the cultural needs of the people of Kuwait" (Mahgoub 2008: 158); or according to the scholar Yasser Mahgoub (2008: 181), the city of Kuwait illustrates the "creation of an alienated place" because of the unchecked role of the "outsider," who transmitted the latest technology and criticized from a distance but failed to engage in a dialogue with local architects.

Translational building practice has now become the norm in the context of the global economy. As integral parts of multinational capitalism, many Gulf cities have become the world's most active zones for ambitious skyscraper design, large-scale leisure developments, and spectacularization of architecture at the expense of the migrant labor rights and the unrestrained exploitation of workers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh (Akcan 2014; see also Rizvi, CHAPTER 48). "Get a project here and it could be the *tabula rasa* of your dreams," the *Architects' Journal* introduced Qatar and its capital Doha in 2009 as the new emerging market for architects, along with Dubai and Abu Dhabi. At the turn of the twentieth century, approximately 80 percent of the big-scale building production in the United Arab Emirates and in Qatar was carried out by foreign architects, including SOM, Atkins Architects, HOK, Rem Koolhaas (OMA), Norman Foster, Zaha Hadid, Arata Isozaki, I.M. Pei, Kenzō Tange, Rafael Vinoly, UN Studio, Santiago Calatrava, Legorreta + Legorreta, and Jean Nouvel. For the reconstruction of Beirut's civil-war-torn city center, international talents are being invited such as Rafael Moneo, Vincent James, Steven Holl, Arata Isozaki, Jean Nouvel, Norman Foster, and Herzog & de Meuron. The new Central Business District in Istanbul and the shopping centers in its peripheries have been designed by the Foreign Office Architects, Arup, Jerde/Simones/Lopez, REX, while Turkish architects such as Murat and Melkan Tabanlıoğlu, Enis Öncüoğlu and Cem Altınöz, Kerem Erginoğlu and Hasan Çalışlar are building extensively in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan.

While the vices and virtues of this recent global phenomenon exceed the scope of this chapter (see Akcan 2014), it is useful to note how contemporary architects continue to refer to the identity markers of the previous decades. For example, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai by SOM (2004–2010) is the world's tallest skyscraper to date (828 m), adding another score to the city's records. Its height presented a structural engineering challenge, which was solved by an innovative thin six-sided concrete core that is replaced by steel on the 156th floor, as well as by spiraling setbacks. And yet, residues of postmodern and Orientalist fixations on Islamic identity have not been abandoned: the tower is officially promoted as inspired by a desert flower. Explaining his design, Adrian Smith (2005), then at SOM, said, "Spirals come up in many forms in Islamic architecture. The tower goes up in steps in a spiraling way. In Islamic architecture, this symbolizes ascending towards the heavens." While it is hard to identify whether the architect is referring to the famous spiral minarets erected in the ninth-century Abbasid capital of Samarra in Iraq, or to Frank Lloyd Wright's fantastical Baghdad project, this quotation testifies to the perceived place of the "Islamic" as an identity-marker of architecture to complement or balance advanced technological ambitions. Many architects use stylized and technologically reinterpreted versions of *mashrabiyya* (pierced grilled windows) to create forceful symbols, as in the French architect Jean Nouvel's West Bay Tower in Doha (2005–2012) that enwraps the whole iconic tower with a continuous latticed and pierced fenestration; or to achieve impressive light and shadow effects, as in the same architect's Louvre Museum in the Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi, or the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki's campus buildings in the Qatar Education City in Doha (2004–2008) (Figure 49.4). By now, *mashrabiyya*s have come to be perceived as one of the most easily identifiable markers of "Islamic architecture" whether reincarnated as a brise soleil or decoration, recalling their ubiquity in nineteenth-century European Orientalist depictions of the Middle East.

After Kuwait recovered from the hiatus due to the economic crisis of the 1980s and the war with Iraq in 1990, the Al-Hamra Firdous Tower (2003–2010), by the Turkish architect Aybars Aşçı working at SOM's New York office, rose on the city's skyline (Figure 49.5). The client asked for "a symbol of national pride" but devoid of common Orientalist stereotypes. Aşçı (Akcan and Aşçı 2013: 50) remembered him saying: "'do not propose me a mashrabiya. Just because we live in the Middle East … every foreign architect proposes us some kind of mashrabiyya as a cultural response.' He knew the discourse of Orientalism. He was well aware of Edward Said." Perhaps this conversation alone represents the continuing struggle of some individuals – regardless of their country of citizenship – both against Orientalism and marginalization, yet in a geopolitical context shaped by foreign and local forces that make it difficult to sustain critical positions. Aşçı cites SOM's Aga Khan Award-winning Bank of Jeddah as a self-referential source that initiated

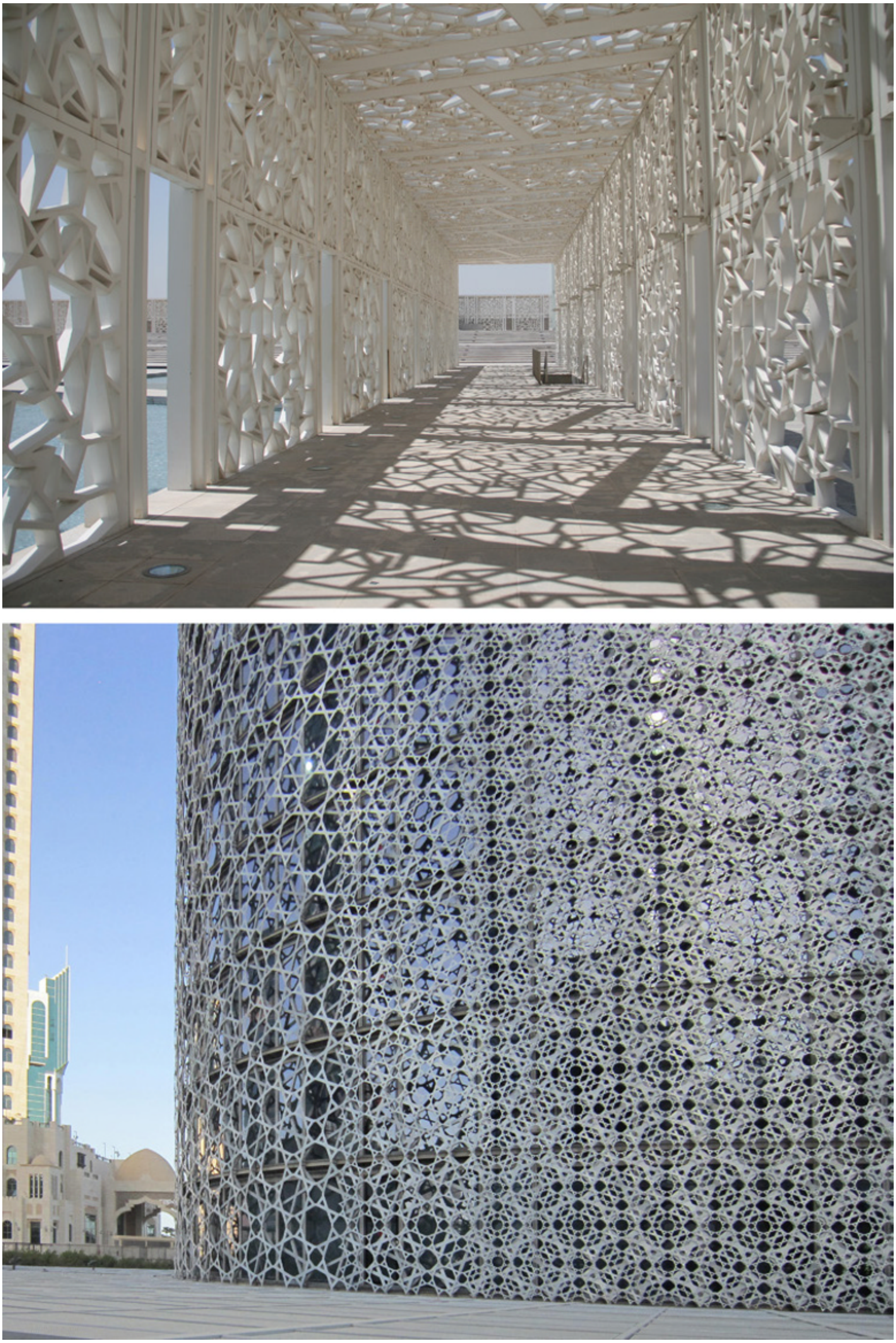

Figure 49.4 New use of *mashrabiyya*. Top: Arata Isozaki Associates, Qatar Education City, Ceremonial Court, Doha, Qatar, 2004–2008; Bottom: Jean Nouvel, West Bay Towern, Doha, Qatar, 2005–2012. Source: Esra Akcan. Reproduced with permission.

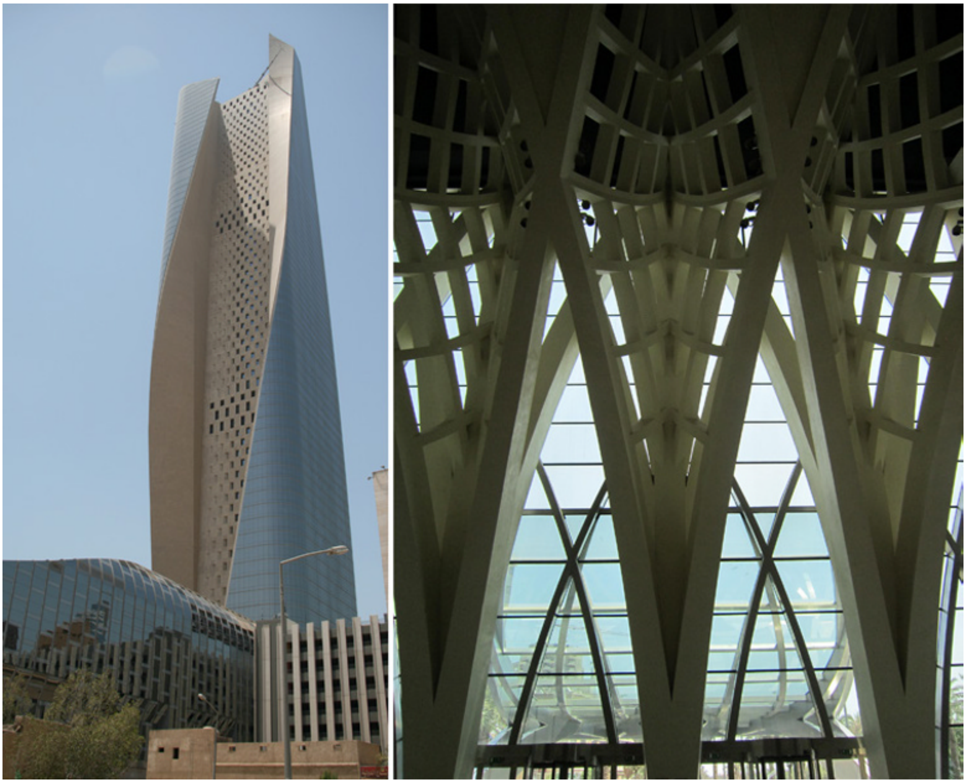

FIGURE 49.5 Aybars Aşçı for SOM, Al-Hamra Firdous Tower, Kuwait City, Kuwait, 2003–2010. Source: Esra Akcan. Reproduced with permission.

the trajectory of climate-specific skyscrapers in hot and arid climates. With its solid stone façades that let controlled light and air through one big sculptural opening on each façade, this building signified a refusal to export Miesian glass skyscrapers into this climate.

The Al-Hamra Firdous Tower negotiates the desire for panoramic views of the Gulf from three sides with the need for protection from excessive sun. The designers provided fully transparent walls on three sides to enable the views, but they protected the south side not only by using a solid wall made out of brushed Jura limestone but also by subtracting a spiraling slice from the prismatic volume and thereby providing shades to the south side in accordance with the path of the sun. Major structural and tectonic inventions in the building are the hyperbolic paraboloid reinforced concrete walls, the lamella bracing scheme that prevents buckling on the lower levels and frees the lobby from columns, and a barrel vault that lets light filter through a concrete web. Aşçı insists on the use of new technologies and the collaboration with engineers for the precise calculation and optimization of passive climate-control techniques, which would have otherwise remained merely metaphoric. If the mid-century modernists who used climate-specific architectural forms and passive ventilation and cooling techniques claimed to have found a rational basis to traditional vernacular architecture, Aşçı wants to take the step into precisely calculated, parametrically generated, and systematically optimized climate-controlled buildings that refresh the principles of traditional warming and cooling techniques.

To conclude, these examples illustrate that West Asian urban centers throughout the twentieth century were shaped by translation processes and decisions of both "foreign" and "local" professionals, who should hence share not only the credit for the landmarks but also the criticism for the general urban outcomes. In this chapter, I have proposed to set a distance both to the excessive heroization of European and North American architects by turning a blind eye to the geopolitical and economic hierarchies, and to the excessive nationalist criticism that sees nothing but imperialist imagination in these encounters. Rather, I propose to theorize them as marked by complex translations, and to assess the different qualities and ideologies of each specific example of architecture in which the process of translation is manifest. The predominance of foreign firms implies that the authorities who invited them must have perceived architecture as part of a technological progress that they felt the need to implement for the country's modernization. The simultaneous aspiration for cultural specificity initiated a translation process that motivated the construction of an imagined national, climatic, or religious identity and resulted, at each instance, in a specific coming together of the place of departure and the place of arrival. Even though the examples in this chapter were not taking place in official imperial contexts, as state-initiations, they were translations from above nonetheless. Equally important are the translations from below that they had the potential to set in motion: the very dialogue between collaborating foreign and citizen architects, the genuine interest in local climates and architectural forms for those who could eliminate their sense of ethnographic authority, the cosmopolitan ethics that might emerge out of this dialogue. It is not translations per se, but uneven, unidirectional and forced translations that have replicated the dominant geopolitical hierarchies of modernity.

Walter Benjamin (1968) and Yunus Kazım Köni (1944) specified a good text as one that is translatable and a good translation as one that opens a language to transformation, because translatability would remind us that a future for true conversation is imaginable. This future would have been constructed through many translations, which do not simply assimilate and cover over the foreign but open themselves to the foreign to such an extent as to agree to transform a language. It is, after all, translation that makes it possible for a population, wherever in the world, to be enriched by what was its outside, rather than being consumed in its own claims of national/regional/religious superiority. Given the continuing geopolitical hierarchies in a contemporary world whose institutions in power seem to perceive a benefit in perpetual war between the "West" and "Islam," it seems ever more necessary to demonstrate the intertwined histories of both, and to challenge these categories themselves in a way that might also lead to an institutional critique of "Islamic art and architecture" as an art historical subfield, while advocating a commitment to a new culture of translatability from below and in multiple directions for a truly cosmopolitan ethics in a globalizing world.

Notes

1 I should like to thank Sibel Bozdoğan for sharing her unpublished article with me, which extends this topic comprehensively: Thoughts on S. Blair and J. Bloom's 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field', *Art Bulletin*, March 2003, pp. 52–184.

2 I should like to thank Elie Haddad for sharing with me his unpublished paper, Architecture in Lebanon (1970–2005).

3 The subject of Polish architects in Kuwait is being explored by Lukasz Stanek. His presentation at the 2014 SAH Conference in Austin was titled "Polish Architecture after Socialist Globalization."

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50

Calligraphic Abstraction

Iftikhar Dadi

Ibrahim El Salahi's painting *The Last Sound* (1964), executed on a square canvas with a carefully limited palette of grays and earth tones, is organized around a central circular dynamic core (Figure 50.1). Radiant lines thrust outward from a barely perceptible African mask-like form. Celestial bodies, elements of calligraphic geometric and animate shapes, and actual palimpsest-like Arabic calligraphic prayers surround the central form, creating a metaphoric universe in which the last sound is echoed. The title of the work refers to the Islamic practice of reciting prayers for the dead and dying. In the work, El Salahi renders the soul's passage from the corporeal to the celestial as it travels toward heavenly forms inhabiting the universe and beyond. *The Last Sound* is, however, not a narrative or realist work but a manifestly modernist one, in which the terrifying event is metaphorized in a dynamic formal composition. Here, the abstraction of African sculptural forms and calligraphy serves to universalize the event – no realist or academic visual language could obviously be adequate to the scope of the subject. The relation El Salahi creates between African abstract forms and Arabic calligraphy that itself refers to Islamic discursive textuality invokes the gravitas of its theme.

The assured handling of the visual language with which *The Last Sound* is painted might lead one to imagine that El Salahi is working from an aesthetic grammar already in place, perhaps developed much earlier. But it was only very recently that El Salahi himself had articulated the linkage between Arabic calligraphic and African sculptural forms. *The Last Sound* was painted during the middle of an intense period of modernist experimental effort carried out by the artist between 1958 and the late 1960s. It is the working out of his concerns by praxis and the overthrowing of his academic training (1954–1957) at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, that mark El Salahi's intellectual concerns during that era. While his contribution is distinctive in developing an aesthetic of decolonization for the Sudan and much of Africa – situated among Islamic textuality, African plastic

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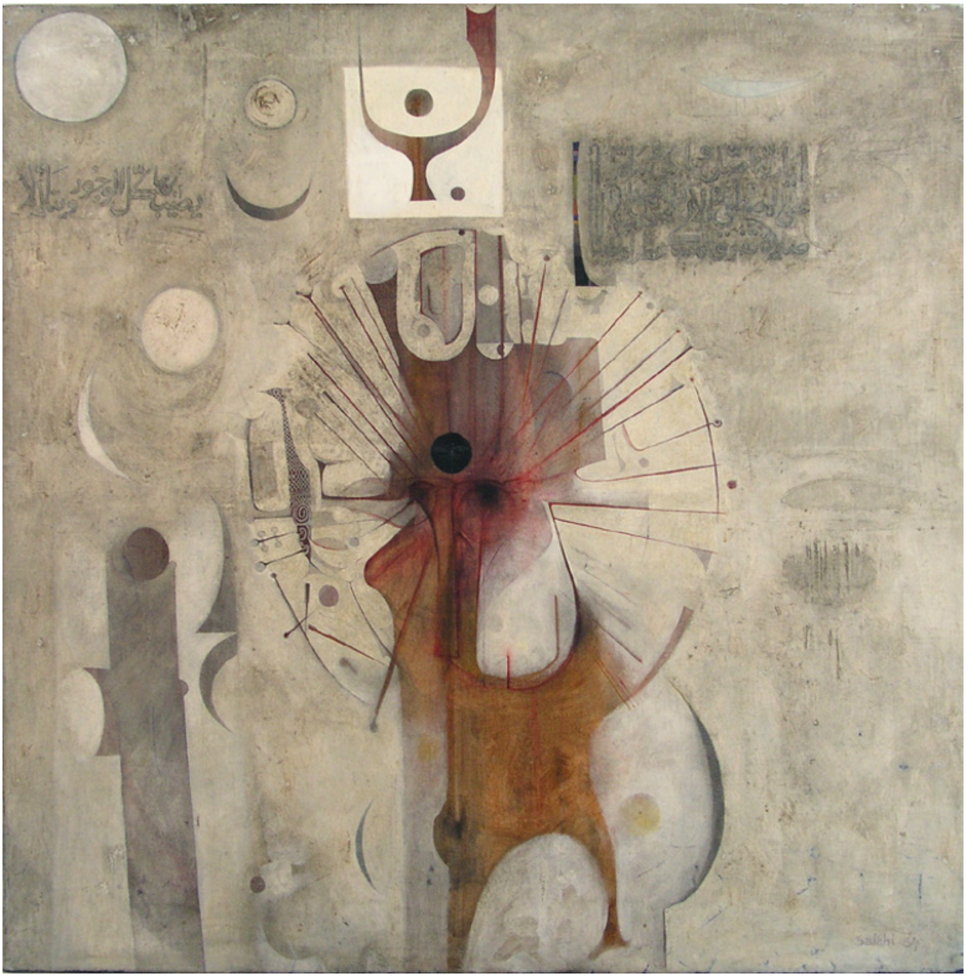

Figure 50.1 Ibrahim El Salahi, *The Last Sound*, 1964. Oil on canvas, 121.5 × 121.5 cm. Source: DACS. Reproduced with permission.

forms, and transnational modernism – it can be usefully compared to other modernist artists from the Islamic world who were engaged with similar cultural problems in the wake of decolonization from the mid-twentieth century onward.

Calligraphic Abstraction in Context

Between 1955 and 1975, artists from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia reworked Arabic calligraphic motifs in entirely new ways (by Arabic calligraphy, I also refer to Persian and Urdu which share the Arabic alphabet). Not only were earlier attitudes about classical Arabic calligraphy decisively modified but modern Western genres such as academic realism in portraiture, landscape, and still life (which were still in vogue in the 1950s) were also reshaped by a renewed concern with the abstract and expressive possibilities of the Arabic script. The Arabic script was not simply utilized in a classical manner to render beautifully a religious verse or endow it with ornamental form; rather, the script was often imbued with figuration and abstraction to a degree that resisted a straightforward literal or narrative meaning.[1]

The imbrication of modernist calligraphy with post-cubist art represents a broad artistic movement, but my concern here is not to conduct a survey of its development, a task that has been accomplished by Wijdan Ali (1990, 1997) and by others in numerous monographs on various national modern art histories.[2] Instead, this chapter explores the reasons why these diverse artists were compelled to grapple with common aesthetic issues during the post-1945 period. Their groundbreaking artistic projects can be understood in a variety of ways: as individual and subjective expressions, as enacting a dialogue with nationalism, and as a critical engagement with metropolitan modernism and cosmopolitanism. In order to demonstrate how these works transcend the borders of the nation and gesture toward larger forms of affiliation, after first introducing key artists and their works, I will briefly trace the broad contours of decolonization and its relationship to the visual arts in the region, focusing on the Sudan, Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq.

As stated, between 1955 and 1975 numerous artists working in the diverse region from North Africa to South Asia contributed to a movement that transformed Arabic calligraphy into modern art – mostly without direct knowledge of one another's work. Ibrahim El Salahi (1930–) in the Sudan (Figure 50.1, Figure 50.2), Sadequain Naqqash (1930–1987) in Pakistan (Figure 50.3, Figure 50.4), Charles Hossein Zenderoudi (1937–) in Iran, Shakir Hassan Al Saʿid (1925–2004) in Iraq, and many others, all created a new aesthetic language of calligraphic figuration and abstraction. Zenderoudi worked out these possibilities in his paintings of the late 1950s, inspired by Shiʿite talismanic designs and popular posters and shrines. He was one of the founders of an Iranian artistic approach to calligraphy that was named the "Saqqa Khaneh" in 1962. The term refers to public places for drinking water, and has populist associations with the martyrdom of Shiʿis at the Battle of Karbala in 680, in which they were deliberately deprived of water (Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art 1977) (Daneshvari 2013; Keshmirshekan 2009). For modernist Arab artists, the word *hurufiyyah* (from the Arabic *harf*, letter), which already carried an intellectual, esoteric, and Sufi charge, was now invested with a new connotation of formal abstraction – in distinction to the word *khattat* that denoted the traditional calligrapher (Naef 2003: 169). The Iraqi theorist and artist Al Saʿid was part of a group that discarded mimetic representation in favor of a "purer" calligraphic form. Al Saʿid was a key participant and theorist in the movement that mounted the One Dimension Group exhibition, held in Baghdad in 1971 (Al-Khamis 2011: 29;

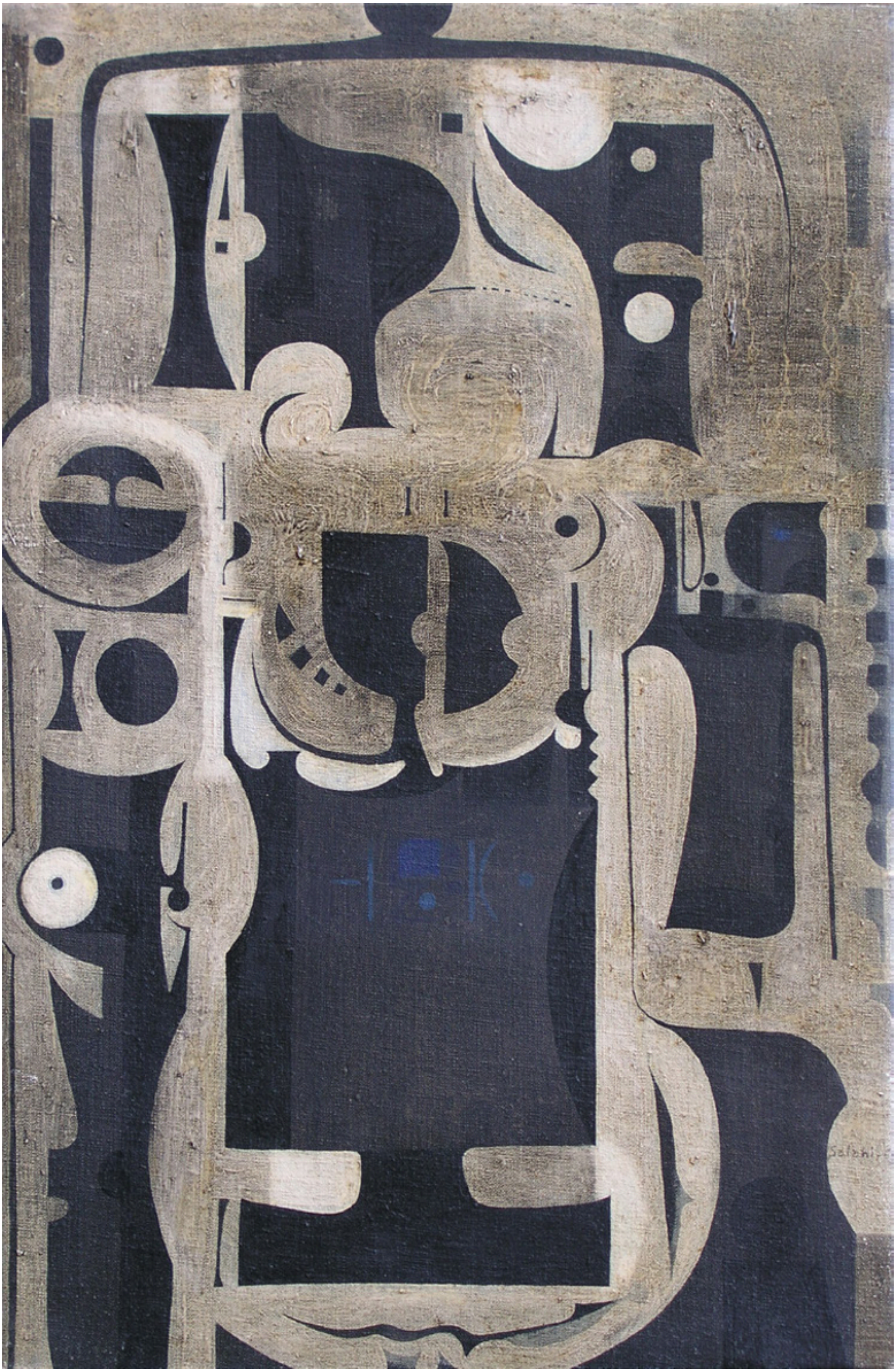

Figure 50.2 Ibrahim El Salahi, *They Always Appear*, 1964–1965. Oil on canvas, 30.5 × 45.5 cm. Source: DACS. Reproduced with permission.

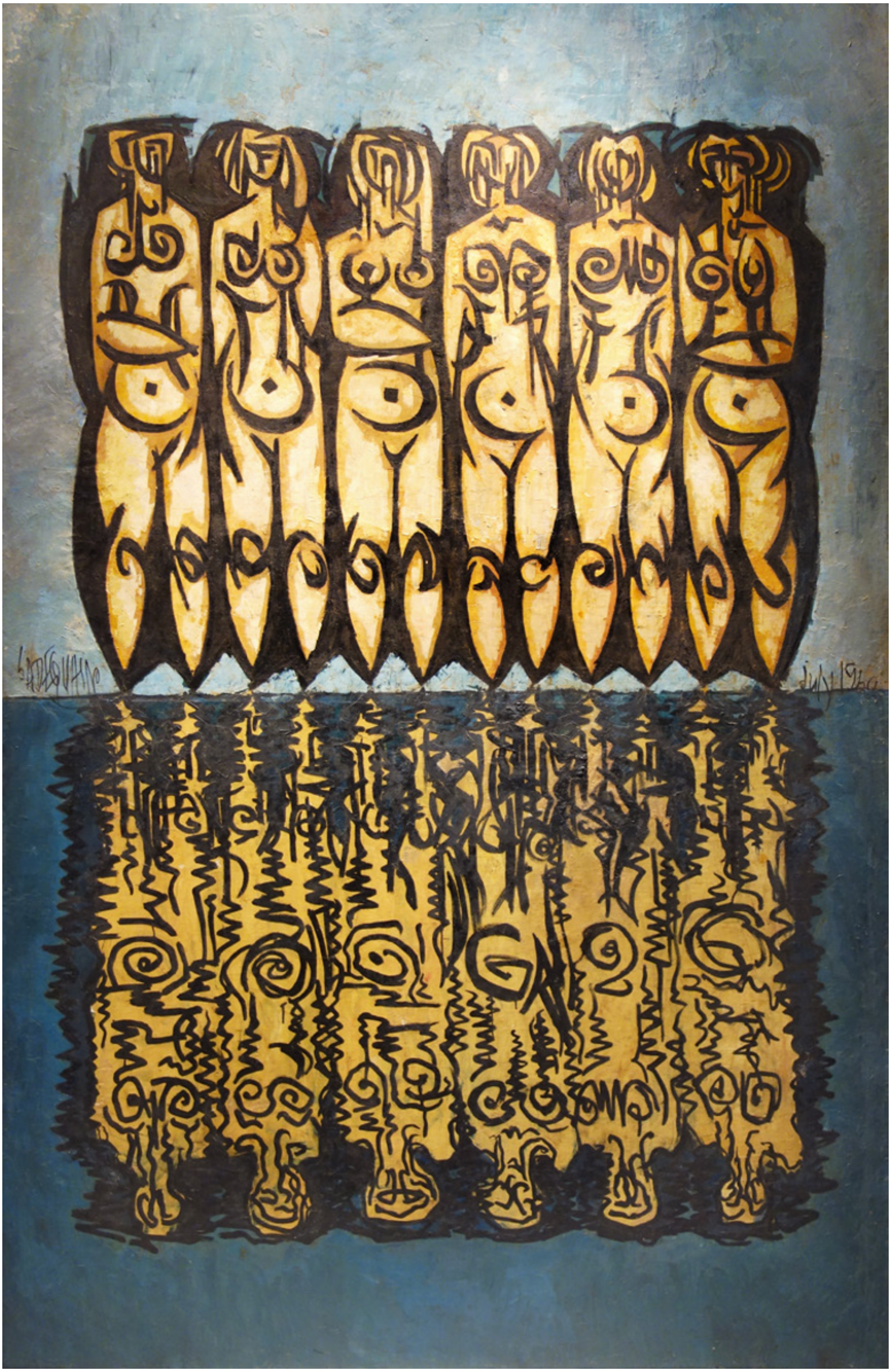

FIGURE 50.3 Sadequain, *Untitled*, 1960. Oil on canvas, 139.5 × 213.5 cm. Source: Collection of Mariam Oomerbhoy, Mumbai. Reproduced with permission.

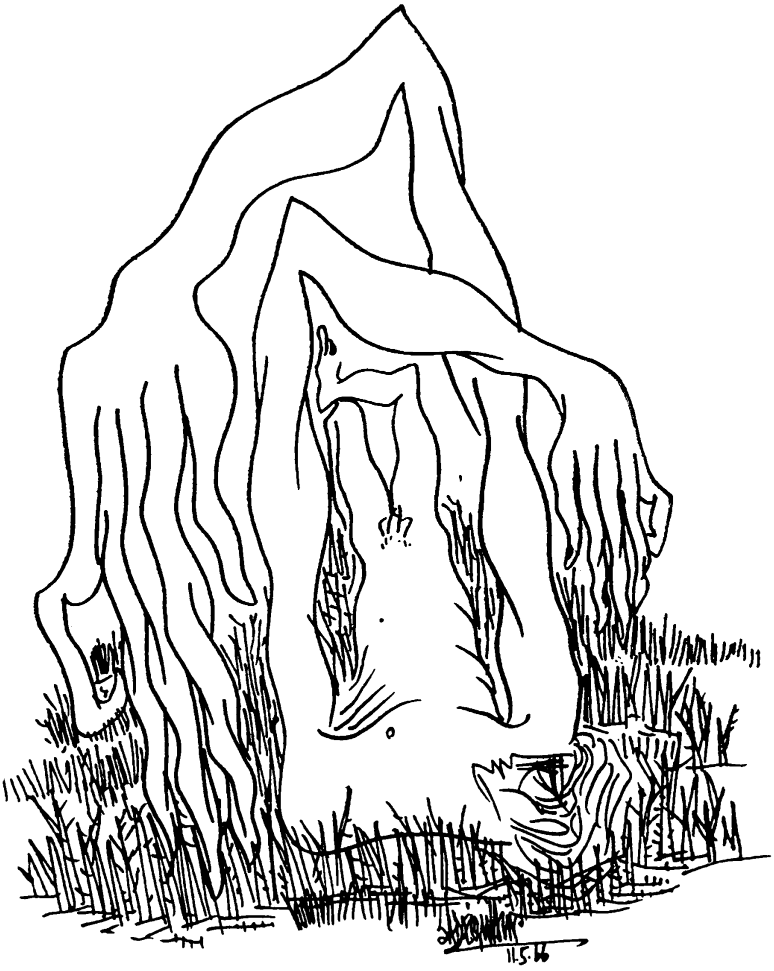

Figure 50.4 Sadequain, *Self-portrait*, 1966. Pen and ink on paper. Dimensions n.a. Source: Sadequain Foundation. Reproduced with permission.

Muzaffar 1990: 166; Selim 2011: 52). This important exhibition also included the US-based Syro-Iraqi artist Madiha ʿUmar, who was a pioneer in developing abstract calligraphic paintings from as early as 1945, and held one of the first exhibitions of modern Arabic calligraphic works at Georgetown public library in 1949 (Nashashibi, Nader, and Adnan 1994: 33). Working in Pakistan, Hanif Ramay in the early 1950s, Anwar Jalal Shemza (Figure 50.5) in the United Kingdom from the later 1950s, and Sadequain explored calligraphy in relation to modernism. Sadequain transformed calligraphy to figuration in a painterly manner during the late 1950s, but his work became more linear and graphic by the mid-1960s, leading him to visually explore the poetic subjectivity of the dominant Indo-Persian cultural milieu that characterizes South Asian Muslim culture (Akhund, Said, and

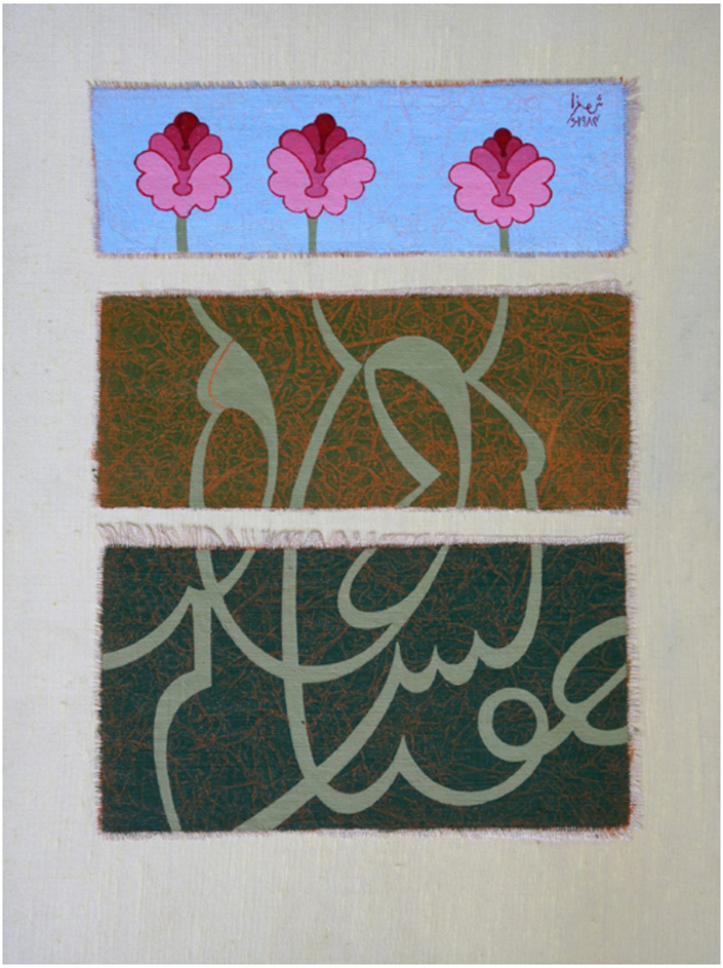

FIGURE 50.5 Anwar Jalal Shemza, *Roots Three*, 1984. Oil on canvas, mounted on silk and hardboard, 30 wide × 40 high cm. Source: Shemza Estate and Jhaveri Contemporary. Reproduced with permission.

Yusuf 2003; Araeen 2005; Dadi 2010: Naqvi 1998: 364–436 and passim). During the late 1950s in the Sudan, El Salahi created a dialogue between calligraphy and figuration that introduced West African motifs to his multifaceted response to the heterogeneity of the linguistic, religious, and cultural landscape of the region, and his paintings acknowledged the persistence of Islamic influences in Africa and the Arab world (Beier 1962, 1993; Hassan 1995).

The Western avant-garde was clearly significant for this revival of calligraphy. For mid-twentieth-century non-Western artists, the aftermath of Picasso's cubism, Wilfredo Lam's surrealist synthesis of cubism with Africana religions in Cuba during the 1940s, and such mid-twentieth-century movements as lettrism, art brut, and art informel were far more compelling modalities than older perspectival and realist European academic styles.[3] A genealogy of European-inflected training was a common factor for many artists. For example, Zenderoudi studied in Tehran in the late 1950s with teachers who trained in Paris and Italy, and he has resided primarily in France since 1961 (Daftari 2002; Zenderoudi 2005). Al Saʿid, who visited Paris on a scholarship in 1956, was a member of a group of Iraqi impressionist painters that maintained extensive contact with Western Europe during the 1950s (Al-Khamis 2011: 29; Muzaffar 1990: 162; Naef 1996: 250–253 and passim). Sadequain was self-taught, but after he won a prize at the Biennale de Paris in 1961, he spent the next seven years working mostly in Paris.[4] El Salahi trained in London from 1954 to 1957 and then traveled extensively during the 1960s, in West Africa, Europe, and Mexico, including holding extended fellowships in the United States. The significance of the work of these artists, however, is by no means reducible to European and American prototypes.

Art and Decolonization

The challenges that decolonization posed for culture in Asian and African nations formerly under direct or indirect British rule were especially acute in the two decades after 1955.[5] A profound and intensive search for new artistic languages began at that time, which would seek to recover expressivity that had been repressed under colonialism but that would also actively *produce* a new modern culture. This growing awareness of national independence and sovereignty created a demand for a new aesthetic of decolonization, one that would remain in dialogue with metropolitan developments but would also account for regional and nationalist specificities. Artists attempted to find visual languages adequate to the aspirations of decolonization by creating work that appeared to fulfill the expectations of a *national art*; hence, it is no surprise that this intensive and fertile period of artistic creativity has been primarily understood as a nationalist undertaking. Indeed, one can find numerous studies in which the artistic and aesthetic developments during this period are understood as "national" ventures. However, the demands put on cultural production in the mid-1960s were highly overdetermined: the new culture was to be individuated, yet collective; it was to be completely modern in the sense of being in dialogue with artistic production in the industrialized world, yet it was also mandated to represent local histories and lived practices that were hitherto suppressed; and, above all, the new culture was to be emblematic of national specificity.[6] The gap between academic art and postcolonial realities could be vast.[7] Clearly the stakes were very high, as artists were expected to do nothing less than to develop a new cultural language that would exploit the opening provided by decolonization – understood at the time as an opportunity to enact a truly world-historical shift in politics and culture – but these demands could not be reconciled easily.

The artists who grappled with these challenges in their sweeping, highly charged careers became national legends. The importance of the national framework remains highly significant in the specific context of calligraphic abstraction. Indeed, since the beginning of his career in 1955 and certainly after his return from Paris in 1968, Sadequain enacted the persona of the supreme Pakistani national artist, a role that was celebrated in a 2002 retrospective in a national museum, accompanied by a massive, largely congratulatory, catalogue of his career.[8] In Sudan, El Salahi is regarded as one of the founders of the Khartoum School of Art and through his teaching and artwork became a highly influential and dynamic exemplar for successive generations of Sudanese and African artists. In Iran, Zenderoudi's paintings were highlighted in a number of state-sponsored exhibitions, including numerous Tehran Biennials during the 1960s, and a 2001 retrospective at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art 2001). Since 1958, the Iraqi government has been a major patron of the arts, sponsoring numerous public works,[9] planning exhibitions of modern art within Iraq and in international venues,[10] and encouraging scholarship and publications on ancient, classical Arab and modern Iraqi art and culture (Davis 2005: chapters 5 and 6).

The national framework is thus fundamental in situating these artists as eminent cultural personas who each developed schools of national artistic practice. However, the link between national art and the diaspora also needs to be taken into account. It is in the diaspora that many such artists encountered the range and strength of Western artistic practices firsthand. They were able to visit the great Western museums, filled with canonical works, which many had previously seen only in magazine reproductions. It is in the diaspora that many of these artists met with other Western and non-Western artists, learning about one another's methods and concerns. Moreover, artists frequently sought institutional support to develop their careers in the diaspora, as such support was not as well established in their own countries. Comparatively speaking, the governments of Iran and Iraq were able to provide better opportunities for artists during the period from the late 1950s to the late 1970s. Mostly, national support meant showing in a limited number of galleries and in private collections, participating in a few official exhibitions and public art projects, and on occasion, traveling for the purpose of providing national representation in international fairs.

El Salahi's intellectual formation was forged during his study in London and became even broader during his travels in the United States in the early and mid-1960s, when he had a chance to meet with artists, jazz musicians, political activists, and black intellectuals. He also traveled to Mexico to meet with artists there and to China to study its artistic pedagogy. As the example of Négritude, the francophone black cultural movement that emerged in the 1930s shows, in an important sense, the experience of diaspora engendered transnational aesthetic movements, as well as new affiliations of identity and community (Lambert 1993). El Salahi also facilitated the imagining of a broader Africanist aesthetic, not least by his participation in exhibitions in Nigeria in 1961 and in Senegal in 1966 (El Salahi n.d.: 96).

It is worthwhile to look more closely at two artists here – El Salahi and Sadequain – to understand the circumstances of their careers and their aesthetic choices. Both artists are considered heroic national figures in Sudan and Pakistan, their respective countries. Metropolitan experiences were formative for both artists, who each evolved formal artistic languages influenced by Arabic calligraphy. They were born in the same year (1930), but their educational backgrounds differ sharply – El Salahi was formally trained as an artist in Khartoum and London and has been a cosmopolitan intellectual with wide-ranging interests. Sadequain was not able to acquire much formal Western-style art education and throughout his life felt most comfortable in the cultural milieu of Urdu. Both artists started their careers during the 1950s as modernist artists, although with the rise of Islamist politics, they also faced political crises in the mid-1970s, which had, in different ways, profoundly transformative effects on both.

El Salahi's rejection of the academic training he had received in England was prompted by his awareness, when he returned to the Sudan, of his training's inadequacy and irrelevancy to the role that art ought to play in postcolonial Sudan. El Salahi and the Pakistani artist Anwar Jalal Shemza were at the Slade in London during the late 1950s, and both had become painfully aware of the marginal status accorded to Islamic art in the public lectures delivered by the celebrated art historian Ernst Gombrich.[11] And by the late 1950s and the early 1960s, the failure of academic painting to break out of the narrow elite salon and gallery exhibition circuit of Khartoum and engage with a more democratic and vernacular visual culture impelled El Salahi toward a radical aesthetic shift. As he describes it, this transformation demanded breaking open the Arabic letter and exploring the new aesthetic universe that emerged from the fragments and the interstices. Fracturing the Arabic letter also broke the classical calligraphic text as a repository of received meaning. This is evident in a series of paintings whose very title, *They Always Appear* (1964–1965), signifies the emergence of figural forms among the spaces defined by the figure–ground relationship of abstracted calligraphic shapes (Figure 50.2). The artist recalls,

> I limited my color scheme to somber tones … In the next step I wrote letters and words that did not mean a thing. Then came a time when I felt I had to break down the bone of the letter, observing the space within a letter and the space between a letter and the other on the line. I wanted to see what was there and find out their basic components and origins. There the Pandora's box opened up wide before my eyes … in place of those broken-up letters I discovered animal and plant forms, sounds, human images, and what looked like skeletons with masked faces. (cited in Beier 1993: 29)

El Salahi's experiments thus resulted in an abstraction that was regional, yet modernist, and that referred to a vast ensemble of iconic and textual material, traversing the Arabic-Islamic discursive tradition and West African iconography.

Sadequain's explorations of modernist subjectivity in postcolonial Pakistan led him to articulate the Parisian avant-garde with abstracted constructions of artistic subjectivity in the Indo-Persian poetic tradition (Figure 50.3). During his years in Paris, Sadequain's figuration became more linear and more recognizably calligraphic. In a characteristic self-portrait from 1966, his contorted fingers spell the word *Allah* (Figure 50.4) (Sadequain 1966). Sadequain's growing involvement with calligraphy culminated in 1968 and 1969, after his permanent return to Pakistan from Paris, when he illustrated the poetry of the famous nineteenth-century Urdu poet Ghalib, published his own collection of poetry that he had himself calligraphed and illustrated, and began writing verses from the Qurʾan for the first time in his career (Sadequain 1969, 1971a, 1971b, 1979a).

Sadequain also broadly shared many aspects of El Salahi's artistic explorations in discovering possibilities of textuality and figuration, and indeed, both artists were exhibited at Galerie Lambert in Paris during the 1960s, albeit in separate exhibitions. The rise of repressive governments during the mid-1970s, however, had a major impact on their careers. During their early years, both artists were mostly apolitical, but when the Sudanese and the Pakistani governments turned toward the Islamist Right, a response was forced upon each artist. El Salahi was arbitrarily jailed for six months in 1975 and 1976 without charge. This traumatic event decisively shifted his career trajectory – his post-prison concerns achieved an even deeper aesthetic dialogue with calligraphy and figuration, especially in his black-and-white panels. By contrast, Sadequain publicly accommodated himself to the new political environment, while remaining nonconformist in his private life. Critics have accused Sadequain, who produced state-sanctioned Qurʾanic calligraphy in his later career, of aesthetic complicity with the regime of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, president of Pakistan between 1978 and 1988, and some observers see the coarsening of the artist's work after the mid-1970s as the price paid for this unfortunate alliance (Naqvi 1998: 435). But even in his later years, Sadequain never created works that function as instruments of propaganda for Islamization, and in this sense, it would be misleading to regard him in his later career as an artist merely working on behalf of the state.

The mid-1970s crisis in the lives of both artists corresponds to a larger crisis in postcolonial sovereignty in many nations in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, which is clearly visible in the aesthetic realm. Wijdan Ali has traced the rise of the "calligraphic movement" that "gained momentum, reaching its peak in the 1980s" but has noted a clear decline in artistic production, attributing it to the "amount of poor-quality work that has passed itself off as calligraphic art" (Ali 1997: 158–159). Silvia Naef has similarly noted that in Arab art, *hurufiyya* painting during the 1970s and 1980s became popular "to the extent of becoming inflationary" (Naef 2003: 170). The coincidence between the rise of political, nation-based Islam and the general degeneration of calligraphic art is hardly accidental. By the late 1970s, individual artistic achievement was subsumed under official state culture, especially with the rise of Islamist regimes in Sudan and Pakistan, the Iranian Revolution in 1978,[12] and the consolidation of Saddam Hussein's rule in Iraq in 1979, as a result of which much calligraphic art became more instrumental, propagandist, and in this sense, degraded. The Iranian Revolution, for example, engendered an entire universe of posters and popular graphics in which calligraphy was deployed as an instrument of propaganda (Atanasiu 2006: 13; Chelkowski 2002; Chelkowski and Dabashi 2000). With characteristic hyperbole, in Iraq, Saddam Hussein, who had increasingly publicly turned to Islam after his defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, is reported to have commissioned the complete Qurʾanic text calligraphed in his own blood.[13] General Zia's Pakistani state also promoted calligraphy during the 1980s in accordance with his wider project of the "Islamization" of Pakistan (Hashmi 2002: 8). Many of the most gifted and creative artists who continued to work in calligraphic abstraction without succumbing to ideological instrumentality ended up living in the diaspora – Zenderoudi, the Algerian artist Rachid Koraïchi, and the Iraqi-born Hassan Massoudy chose to reside in Paris, and El Salahi went into lonely exile in Qatar, which nonetheless provided him with an inner space to explore his innovative linear monochrome works on paper.

During the 1980s and 1990s, political Islam came to denote internally dictatorial and oppressive regimes that were externally weak; the effects of such a compromised politics were visible as symptoms in the national art of the contemporary period. However, this political and aesthetic crisis was not purely national in nature, for it represented a passing toward a "postnational" and global world in which the place of the nation-state had been further diminished by a range of developments. In general terms, the optimistic phase of decolonization in much of Asia, Africa, and other regions lasted only two or three decades, from around 1950 to the mid-1970s. The naive understanding of decolonization as freedom itself was compromised by the growing awareness of the stubborn persistence of (neo)colonialism. In the wake of the 1973 oil crisis, the initiation of new US-led financial restructuring had a deep impact on developing nations. Such nations had faced numerous difficulties in achieving sovereignty during the Cold War period, but these hurdles became virtually insurmountable after 1990 as neo-liberalism became more intrusive. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, the projection of US-led financial interests became intrusively and blatantly global. It is now widely understood that contemporary globalization has largely obliterated the promises of the postcolonial nation-state and substituted little in its place (Prashad 2007, 2012).

By this account, the "postnational" condition has rendered anachronistic the developmental project of the nation-state, along with its cultural and artistic symbols. For if the post-1945 developmental nation-state had represented itself through imagining a timeless and essentialist past, as argued by Benedict Anderson (1991), it equally viewed itself through the idiom of a "nationalist modern" (Scott 1998). The artistic projects of this heroic age responded to this array of forces by simultaneously claiming to be emblematic of individual meanings, of national traditions, and of modernist strivings for universal values.

The artists I have discussed were once applauded as emblematic personas embodying national specificity in Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and the Sudan, yet their aesthetics share many concerns that lie *beyond* the obvious relationship with metropolitan modernism. It needs to be recognized that even during the heroic age, the artists themselves took on a much wider canvas than the nation-state. For example, Zenderoudi's vernacular Shiʿite motifs extend across western Asia into South Asia; Sadequain's Indo-Persian world of poetry is certainly larger than the borders of Pakistan; El Salahi is as much a West African and an Arab artist as he is Sudanese; and the salience and centrality of modern Iraqi culture provides paradigms for the entire Arab world. Clearly, the works of these artists constantly exceed national borders, even as they exceed their relationship to the metropolitan centers of modernist art. These complex relationships are evident early on, when the careers of these artists led them to ceaselessly shuttle between the nation and the still-attractive metropolitan center, while also visiting other "horizontal" locations. For example, El Salahi traveled widely to Nigeria, Mexico, China, Europe, and the United States, and Sadequain, apart from his stay in France, visited other European countries and traveled to Iraq before returning to Pakistan in 1968. During 1973, El Salahi was invited to Baghdad to attend a meeting of Arab artists, where he met Al Saʻid and others and was able to compare his aesthetic explorations in calligraphic abstraction with the more established explorations by Iraqi artists. Later, when El Salahi was in a Sudanese jail in 1976, the brother of the deceased Iraqi artist Jewad Selim (see Lenssen and Rogers, CHAPTER 51), who worked in the Iraqi Embassy in Khartoum, quietly supplied El Salahi with Iraqi cultural journals, notably *Afaq ʿArabiyya* and *Al-Aqlam*.[14]

The Discursivity of Calligraphic Abstraction

For many artists from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, there were two main ways in which experiments with modern art were broadly undertaken: folkloric, figurative, and representational styles can be contrasted with practices that emphasize the textual and the calligraphic and those with figural absence. It is important to stress that rather than describing actual motifs these two modes are analytical categories that help us map the character of artwork produced in the post-independence era – one often finds that both modes are active in the works of a single artist and both are frequently present even within a single artwork. The folkloric/figurative mode consists of motifs that denote *presence* – village scenes, symbols from ancient civilizations, cityscapes, still-lifes, portraiture, and so forth. But in the textual, abstract, and calligraphic modes, there is absence and an evacuation of iconic signifiers, and even calligraphy itself is often deployed in a highly abstract and largely illegible fashion. Rather than indexing specific meanings from a textual source, mutilated calligraphy indexes *textuality itself*. The deferral of meaning that textuality enacts as a general phenomenon is further doubled by the difficulty in deciphering such calligraphic forms that lean heavily toward abstraction. If the folkloric/figurative mode, which was inevitably tied to nationalist iconography, no longer speaks to us in any tangible sense, the abstract/calligraphic mode pries open the boundaries of the nationalist frame. Unlike pre-modern calligraphy, the modernist experiments no longer render a sacred or wise quotation in beautiful and ornamental form but rather raise questions of legibility. In the hands of El Salahi, Zenderoudi, Sadequain, Al Saʿid, and others, the *illegibility* of calligraphy – in its dialogue with post-cubist figuration and in its non-ornamental renderings – opens up the phenomenon of textuality to refer to a constellation of identity in which elements from Africa, from Shiʿite vernacular culture, or from Indo-Persian poetry all exceed the boundaries of nationality. Such artists re-territorialize the Arabic script, foregrounding its discursivity, while also making its aesthetic permeable to the outside, thus problematizing a simple binary homology between art and national identity.

Calligraphic abstraction draws new links among the shared conceptions of a vast region. By virtue of the Arabic script, it generates a form of textuality that indexes the force of discursive and institutional authority. This is not a "past" that was simply "lost" through the epistemic violence of colonialism, as the "past" was, to a significant degree, already text. Indeed, colonialism itself, by its reliance on discursive knowledge, further emphasized textuality. Unquestionably, this past does undergo a "discursive rupture" under the force of colonialism and modernity, but this is not a simple loss.[15] The anthropologist Talal Asad has argued for a conception of an Islamic discursive tradition that problematizes existing temporal and affiliated notions of modernity (as simply characterized by empty secular time and limited to the horizon of the nation-state). In an interview, Asad states:

> In my view, tradition is a more mobile, time-sensitive, more open-ended concept than most formulations of culture. And it looks not just to the past but to the future. A tradition is in part concerned with the way limits are constructed in response to problems encountered and conceptualized. There's always a tension between this construction of limits and the forces that push the tradition onto new terrain, where part or all of the tradition ceases to make sense and so needs a new beginning. And looked at another way: with each new beginning, there is the possibility of a new (or "revived") tradition, a new story about the past and the future, new virtues to be developed, new projects to be addressed. (cited in Scott 2006: 289–290)

Summarizing some of the implications of Asad's approach, Ovamir Anjum, who specializes in Islamic political thought, notes, "The most fascinating questions about any contemporary Muslim society, those of reform, revival, modernity, and tradition, cannot even begin to be addressed until the mutual interaction of the Muslim world within the framework of a global Islamic discursive tradition is accounted for." Anjum reiterates the salience of Asad's conception of a "discursive tradition … attuned to the idea of teaching and argument through time, which becomes capable of transcending local dimensions and encompassing various

Islamic spaces" (Anjum 2007: 656–672, 670). In historical terms, however, unlike other Islamic disciplines, visual practices (such as those now recognized as "Islamic art") were not accompanied by a clearly delineated discursive tradition (Dadi 2010). By orienting itself toward illegibility, calligraphic abstraction in the twentieth century therefore both marks the necessary demand for genealogical legibility in terms of "tradition" and also points to its impossible absence.

Calligraphic experimentation accordingly acknowledges the persistence of the textual past even if it were not oriented to visual practice, as under modernity, this tradition is now abstracted, opened to a dialogue with metropolitan artistic languages and therefore more global in scope. For El Salahi, however, as African artistic traditions were not primarily discursive while the Islamic discursive tradition largely did not attend to visual art, the modernist artist needed to work out the imbrications of textuality and Africanist forms *through practice*. The artist notes,

> We had a problem then that separated the contemporary artist from the local public. I personally felt that a bridge had to be built to close that gap between the two parties. Something work-wise had to be done. I said to myself, "Man, let us for a time forget about those archaic concepts of art for art's sake, and that unreal nonsense of the muse and ivory tower recluse that we read about, and get down to work that might solve our problem." … I worked like mad, introduced Arabic writing and decorative patterns in a corner of my works like a stamp on an envelope, and exhibited some of those works. People, recognizing something that they were a bit familiar with, took note and came a bit closer. I gradually spread the lettering with symbols, words from the Qur'an and Sufi poetry over the surface of the picture, mixing it with figurative work. They came closer, showing a greater degree of interest. (El Salahi n.d.: 36)

Here, the formation of a decolonized audience for modern aesthetics is seen as inextricably tied to experimentation and praxis.

Artists who have undertaken modern calligraphic works since 1975, from Indonesia to North Africa, are too numerous to mention here, although it is relevant to note that few modern artists deployed calligraphy before the mid-1950s.[16] Moreover, within the Islamic world itself, the broad artistic interest in classical calligraphic styles was largely absent until about 1955 – books published on Arabic calligraphy before that date are very few in number, in contrast to numerous later publications devoted to histories of calligraphy, and the presentation of samples of calligraphic styles in substantial albums, which date mostly from the mid-1950s.[17] In Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and other Arab countries during the heroic age, modern calligraphic art emerged together with scholarly and popular interest in traditional calligraphy.[18] Even as traditionalists often attack modernist artists for betraying tradition, the two developments should be viewed as constituting a wider discursive and aesthetic field, albeit characterized by zones of tension and conflict (Naef 2003: 171). Also included in this wider "calligraphic" field is the growing and innovative use of calligraphy and script since the mid-twentieth century for advertising, signage, graffiti, and in printed media. Emerging scholarship in the history of calligraphy thus provided a backdrop for a modern "Islamic" art that was not easily congruent with the boundaries of postcolonial nationhood during the golden age of national sovereignty. Modern calligraphic experimentation, then, is as much a dialogue with this body of discursive and artistic tradition as it is with metropolitan modernism.

The term *cosmopolitanism* denotes the fluidity of contemporary identity, in which affiliations are unmoored from fixed referents during a period of transition and where a new stability and synthesis of institutions and identity are not yet in place. For some observers, a (noncritical) cosmopolitan identification with metropolitan culture was precisely to be resisted by recourse to "national" formations. For example, describing Iraqi art from the 1950s through the 1970s, the noted Palestinian writer Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (who settled in Iraq in 1948) writes,

> One fact that has always to be recognized in understanding Arab art today is that however revolutionary Arab artists may be in concept and in aspiration, a spirit of tradition hangs on to them which they cannot, will not, shake off. However much they may subscribe to the view of "internationalism" or "cosmopolitanism" in modern art, they will not give up the notion that their identity can only be shaped by rooting themselves in a tradition of their own, which helps to give a distinction to their work, marking them off as the creators and extenders of a national culture. (Jabra 1983: 12)[19]

Here, the idea of cosmopolitanism is aligned with metropolitan internationalism and with art whose paradigms are defined by work produced in Paris, London, and New York. In order to remain "national" and Arab, and thus retain a critical difference, Jabra argues that Iraqi artists consciously resist a facile cosmopolitanism in their artistic projects.

Jabra's conception of the nation contains multiple dimensions, however. In a 1986 text, he maps out how his idea of the "national" addresses the specificity of Iraqi (Mesopotamian) history while also referring to a wider Arab world, which is not necessarily a geographic entity. Indeed, according to Jabra, the modern Iraqi artist's awareness of Mesopotamia as the cradle of civilization – and the centrality of the Baghdad-based Abbasid caliphate for the Arab imaginary – "has given an impetus to the idea that Arab tradition not only predates Islam but actually goes back some 5,000 years, and is still viable, Islam being simply one of its more recent manifestations" (Jabra 1988: 169). Thus, while the "nation" is a modern creation, it is also somehow an integral historical part of a wider Arab/Islamic identity, which is to be situated in multiple and overlapping modalities. Building on this approach, the recourse to "Arabness" today is best understood as a discursive process, since the boundaries of Arabic-speaking regions have shifted widely over the centuries. During the medieval era, for example, Spain, Iran, and Central Asia were all key centers of Arabic/Islamic literature and culture. Jabra's Arab "nation" clearly does not consist of a simple, fixed, and stable locus. At least four concepts are suggested within his use of the term, which simultaneously refers to a geographically bounded modern state, a reconstructed and imagined ancient pre-Islamic past, a distinctive Arab character, and an Islamic identity. If the first two referents are delimited by geography, the latter two are emphatically discursive constructions. In much of the Islamic world, repressive governments were supported by Cold War ideologies, which largely succeeded in destroying the organized nationalist-leftist movements, especially in Pakistan and Sudan. Iran and Iraq (until recently) have remained "nationalist," but since 1979 their nationalism has hardly been optimistic or celebratory, at least for any artist of integrity. The attenuation of the national ideal has also diminished appeals to the ancient past, which was in any case a largely folkloric maneuver to invest the timeless past with the halo of national glory. In contrast to Jabra's readings from the 1970s and 1980s, when it seemed that Islam was subsumed into Arab nationalism, the relationship appears to have reversed, as now Islam is seen to overshadow and incorporate Arab nationalist sentiment.

The works of artists from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, who pioneered calligraphic modes of expression in abstract forms of art, reveal precisely the tensions between the "national" and the "universal-Islamic." Such artists as El Salahi and Al Saʿid were as responsive to creating a dialogue with Western visual languages of the mid-twentieth century as they were aware of the glaring need for developing a new national culture. But as this nation came to be imagined through the complex ensemble of concepts described here, these artists also re-created a dialogue with regional emblems (African, Arab, Shiʿite, Indo-Persian, and so forth) and thus with the sign of the discursivity of the Islamic tradition. From 1955 to 1975, their practices mapped local and regional referents together, and by side-stepping direct political motifs, their calligraphic abstraction also performatively contributed to the rise of broader modern Muslim aspiration by furnishing it with aesthetic and affective templates. Even if modern and contemporary conceptions of the Muslim *umma* (the idea of a translocal Muslim community) are invented and imagined, and bear only a fictional relationship to historical reality, these imaginings nevertheless remain deeply constrained by discursive and textual referents. Having enacted references to textuality in pointedly "nonpolitical" articulations, the calligraphic modernist project has relayed its effects into the present, some two decades after the end of the heroic age of decolonization.

The rapid emergence of calligraphic abstraction after 1955 was a result of a complex play of forces that included new conceptions of modernist subjectivity, the need for national culture during decolonization, and a desire for equal participation in transnational modernism. The wider cultural movement of this era projected a new visual "Muslim" aesthetic – although this may not have been the conscious intention of the artists themselves, whose aims were often misunderstood because of the dominant framing of their work as exemplifying national art or as a dialogue with metropolitan centers. By virtue of their mediation of the Islamic discursive tradition and by refusing national Islamist politics, the abstract calligraphic artists from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia have relayed aesthetic and affective potentialities across the heroic age of decolonization into the present. To seriously rethink the contemporary valence of the Islamic discursive tradition implies that artistic endeavors during the era of decolonization have retained critical affiliations and differences from metropolitan modernisms that were not merely local or national but gestured toward aesthetically imagining a new community of interests in the "Muslim" world.

Notes

1 On the traditional role of the calligrapher in the Islamic world, including examples from South Asia, see Schimmel (1984). For an attempt at a taxonomy of modern calligraphic paintings, see Ali 1997: 151–184.

2 On the lettrists in the Arab world, see Daghir 1990; Naef 1996, 2003. On the modern art of Iraq, see Faraj 2001; Jabra 1972, 1983; Muzaffar 2003. The art history of modern Iran is outlined in Balaghi and Gumpert 2002; Daneshvari 2013; Issa, Pakbaz, and Shayegan 2001; Keshmirshekan 2005; Yarshater 1979. On modern Pakistani art, see Dadi 2010.

3 For an anecdotal account of the life of diaspora intellectuals in Paris, see Mphahlele 1995. On the postwar status of the School of Paris, see Adamson 2009.

4 For a description of his experience in Paris, see his letters (Sadequain 1979b).

5 While Iran was never formally colonized, its intellectuals remained caught in many of the same perceptions as those from formally colonized areas, namely, of seeing the country as economically, socially, and culturally backward. In this sense, decolonization as an intellectual and cultural idea is applicable to Iran. Also see Prashad 2007: 75–94.

6 As an example of this outlook, the curator Fereshteh Daftari writes, "Zenderoudi embodies the 'authentic local' with whom begins a movement away from Western idioms and back into the depths of Shiite iconography, articulated not in terms of miniature tradition, say, but rather of the local vernacular," adding "Zenderoudi seemed to satisfy the thirst for a national modern art" (Daftari 2002: 68, 73).

7 Reflecting on the lack of interest among the Sudanese for an exhibition of his work in Khartoum during the late 1950s, El Salahi states, "I understand that every artist has a message to deliver in his or her society … By nature, to start with, one has to address one's Self, the satisfaction of which is initial and crucial in the creative process. Secondly, one addresses Others in one's own society and culture from which one has borrowed and absorbed a great deal that is to be repaid in kind. And thirdly, last but not least, one ultimately does address All, meaning humanity and human society at large" (El Salahi n.d.: 34).

8 But see especially the critical essay by Fazila-Yacoobali (2003).

9 Among them, Jewad Selim's 1961 *Monument of Liberty*, see Selim 2011; Al-Khamis 2011; and Jabra 1974.

10 For example, the Iraqi Cultural Centre, London, held art exhibitions during the 1970s and 1980s such as an exhibition of works by a traditional twentieth-century calligrapher (Hashim 1978).

11 This created a profound crisis in Shemza, leading him towards his mature work. See Holt 1998: 105.

12 Hamid Keshmirshekan notes, however, that the Pahlavi regime from the early 1960s already fostered the kind of abstracted modernism that *Saqqa Khaneh* represented (Keshmirshekan 2009).

13 Arabicnews.com (September 26, 2000). Emirate official: Saddam's writting [sic] of the Qurʾan with his blood is prohibited, http://archive.is/ybdF5 (accessed 3 February 2017). On other instrumental uses of art in Saddam's Iraq, including a painter who with his own blood painted Saddam portraits, see Al-Khalil (1991: 103), and see Chan (2003) for yet another example.

14 Ibrahim El Salahi, interview with the author, Ithaca, New York, December 22, 2005.

15 On "discursive rupture," see Messick 1993: 5.

16 Indonesian examples can be found in George 2008, 2010 and Pameran Kaligrafi Nasional 1979. Rachid Koraïchi from Algeria is an important second-generation artist interested in calligraphic abstraction. The Iraqi artist Madiha ʿUmar was a forerunner in experimenting with calligraphic forms in abstract space (Ali 1990: 152).

17 To get an idea of the limited number of studies on calligraphy in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship, see the bibliography in Ziauddin 1936 (pp. 71–72).

18 Significant examples of studies of calligraphy include Al-Din 1968; Chughtai 1976; and Faza'ili 1971. Iraq, in particular, has published detailed albums and histories of calligraphy. For works by nineteenth- and twentieth-century traditional Iraqi calligraphers, see Aʿzami 1977. Also see Sheila Blair's survey of calligraphy in modernity (2006: 589–627).

19 Also see Jabra 1988: 166.

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51

Articulating the Contemporary

Anneka Lenssen and Sarah A. Rogers

We were asked to produce a collaborative essay about contemporary Islamic art. It is not a straightforward task: To engage with contemporary art from the perspective of any one of the art historical subfields rooted in non-contemporary forms of production and patronage is to encounter acute methodological challenges. These challenges do not stem from a lack of desire to study the contemporary. In fact, the opposite is the case. As the art historian Terry Smith has enumerated, academic departments in the United States and Europe increasingly recognize contemporary art as a field of art historical inquiry, distinguished from art criticism. And yet, even as more and more trained art historians seek to articulate a clear sense of the contemporary, no disciplinary consensus has yet emerged around its common characteristics, forms, and stakes (Smith 2006; Smith 2010). Is the contemporary a period, a set of artistic strategies, or an aesthetic that results from a specific set of sociopolitical conditions? How might we distinguish between the contemporary and the not contemporary? Rather than yield a fixed definition of the contemporary, such inquiries render any categorical definition into a highly vexed proposition. For some commentators, the desire for definitive parameters is an anachronistic one, out-of-synch with globalized simultaneity in new technologies and the market economy. They argue that the art object has been opened up and subsumed to a "pluralist happymix" in which any kind of thing or experience may count as art (Smith 2006: 683). By contrast, art world professionals such as curators and critics often seek to promote the contemporary artistic enterprise as a practice of social criticism, demanding that contemporary art be timely and challenging to the status quo. The one most salient characteristic of contemporary art may simply be that people and institutions want to invest in it. New museums and exhibitions of contemporary art proliferate, as do sales.

As historians seek to grapple with the stakes of a vast and heterogeneous field of contemporary art, they often begin by setting chronological parameters,

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as if the contemporary were a period of production. Many publishing houses take this route as well, responding to the extraordinary consumer appeal of contemporary by generating illustrated survey texts on current art practices titled "art now," or some similar designation. Likewise, within the field of Islamic art history, the courses and conferences that deal with contemporary art typically treat the subject as if it were an epoch, offering a survey of contemporary art in the region as a conclusion to a longer narrative of emergent styles and themes. The question as art historians pose it has tended to be "How do we get there?" that is, how can we extend the field to take into account the artistic production of today? In this chapter, we have opted for a different approach. We begin from the observation that certain artworks and institutions have already gained recognition as contemporary art and ask, "How did we get here?" In other words, how do we analyze this current conjunction of disciplinary developments and the contemporary art world as a subject of historical analysis? For us, the historical view *from* the contemporary offers the most productive approach because the contemporary is neither obvious nor determined. As we explore in this chapter, it is a category that must be continually articulated – claimed, positioned, and sustained through the ordered activities of the overlapping actors and interests that comprise the art world: artists, dealers, curators, critics, collectors, auction-house experts, academics, museum professionals, and governmental and non-governmental promoters, among others. In order to give focus to our inquiry, we take art world developments in the Arab world, by which we mean the modern geopolitical grouping of Arabic-speaking nation-states arrayed from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf, as our primary site of analysis. At present, the region and the oil-producing Gulf states in particular are witnessing a boom in museums, galleries, fairs, and auction sales of modern and contemporary art. As a result, several of the most contentious aspects of the contemporary art world are thrown into high relief, including its complicity with globalization and consumerism; the politics of creative sovereignty versus cultural sensitivity; and the frailties of the nation-state.

We open our chapter by discussing three exemplary works that, insofar as they have been exhibited in venues with international renown and make significant proposals about the status of art and its interaction with the cultural and social multiplicities of the world today, may be securely entered into the ranks of "contemporary art": Yto Barrada's long-term photographic project on the Strait of Gibraltar (begun 1998), Hassan Khan's *Jewel* (2010), and Walid Raad's *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: A History of Art in the Arab World* (begun 2007). Next, we turn to the art world in which these projects are produced, and against which they are evaluated. With a focus on the career trajectory of the Lebanese artist Raad in the context of Beirut and its art world cachet as a site of emergent avant-garde practices, we scrutinize the patterns of curation and reception that continue to serve to distinguish "contemporary" concerns from "modern" ones. So as to further historicize the positive social values associated with contemporaneity, our next section turns to three case studies from earlier periods that are now featured in the rolls of new museums and new canons: Cairo's Contemporary Art Group (est. 1946), the Baghdad Group of Modern Art (est. 1951), and the Casablanca Group (est. 1964). In remarkably different ways, each of these groups sought to negotiate the past and the present to produce a self-reflexively engaged contemporary art, which had implications for both their local settings and for their retrospective reception in today's exhibition projects. Our concluding section returns to examine two recent controversies – a 2011 censorship controversy at the Sharjah Biennial and the ongoing artists' boycott of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi – that arise from the tensions between the self-consciously liberal values of the global contemporary art world and the hereditary, non-democratic rule of Gulf state patrons. These controversial cases force us to return to acknowledge a tension that in fact runs throughout the chapter: the tension between the desire to mobilize contemporary art as an effective tool of political change, and the fact that patron institutions perennially co-opt the presumedly critical character of contemporary art as a statement of cultivated sensibilities and good intentions. This tension can tell us as much about the expectations of our discipline as it does about the objects we study. If "Islamic art" has typically been understood as a set of beautiful objects that are the products of discrete historical cultures, then "contemporary art" typically promises to enact a break with traditional identities and hierarchies. Looked to as a site of new experience and knowledge production, contemporary art (for better or worse) currently represents a field of exchange that cuts across any single cultural or historical precedent, forcing the articulation of alternative affinities and differences.

Contemporary Figures

Since 1998, Yto Barrada has documented the spectral quality of the lives led by residents in Tangier, Morocco, producing highly composed photos of the city's ordinary content so as to evoke disjunction with its promises of escape. The artist loosely groups these tableaus – photographs of sun-bleached metal girding upon a seaside promontory; the faint imprints left by a soccer ball kicked repeatedly against a white wall; the outline of children who have been cast into shadow by an illuminated advertisement for a Mediterranean cruise – together under the title *A Life Full of Holes: The Strait Project*. As a series, they make for a diachronic representation of a place entrapped within imposed strategies of economic and political differentiation. Tangier is located at the western entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar, abutting the narrow strip of sea separating Africa from Europe and the Mediterranean from the Atlantic. Since 1991, its geopolitical position has been negatively defined in relation to "Fortress Europe," as adjacent to but definitively beyond its bounds. In that year, Spain and Portugal signed on to the Schengen Agreement, which created a unified European zone with a single external border to protect the unimpeded circulation of goods and people inside it. In effect, the

Agreement partitions bodies into delimited differential categories – those “inside” and “outside” – and articulates the difference through the reductively racialized terms of civilization – “Europe” and “Africa,” “Christianity” and “Islam” (El Shakry 2010: 66; Tazi 2007). It also transforms the ostensible purpose of activity undertaken in Tangier. The city now represents the last stop before any migrant’s attempt to illegally cross over to economic salvation on the opposite shore. As Barrada has described, the Strait animates every activity on the streets of Tangier with a tension between immediate, harsh reality and powerful allegorical meaning (Barrada 2005: 57). Even its long-term inhabitants remain preoccupied with the thought of leaving it behind.

Some of the most striking images from Barrada’s meditation on the Strait appear in the series “Sleepers,” from 2006. Each photograph depicts a single figure lying prone on the overgrown grass of the city’s public parks (Figure 51.1). The faces are obscured, averted into the ground or covered by a coat in an act of modesty or self-preservation. The text that accompanies the series indicates that the figures are what are designated as *harraga* in North African Arabic, meaning “burners.” Having already burnt their passports as a dissimulating tactic meant to prevent border police from sending them back to their points of origin, they are here photographed during a liminal stage of the arduous journey from South to North. Each photograph therefore depicts a body surrendered to fate, a non-person in a

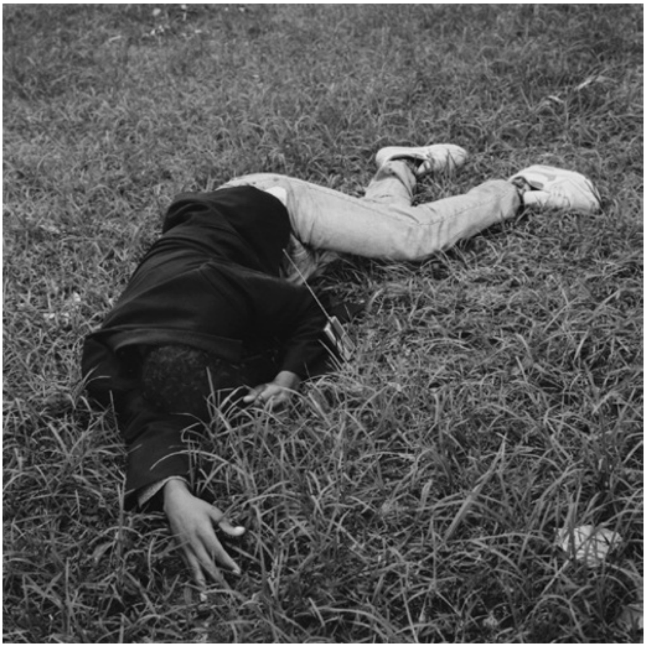

FIGURE 51.1 Yto Barrada, *Dormeurs* (Sleepers), Figure 2, 2006, photography, 49.21 × 49.21 in. Source: Artwork © Yto Barrada. Reproduced with permission.

non-place. Most critics have read these featureless bodies as paradigms of the new world economy – “flexible” labor that has been dispossessed, the plight of refugees, or the condition of bare life without political representation that Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben has identified as the emblematic subject of the whole of modernity (Demos 2006; Downey 2009). Others have read a powerfully messianic religious imagination onto the figures, seeing the bodies as a site where life and death intertwine with a trope of salvation (El Shakry 2010).

The Egyptian artist Hassan Khan – another widely exhibited and respected artist on the global contemporary circuit – works in a different mode than Barrada and her photojournalistic approach to specified locations. Khan constructs his works by a process of abstracting forms of social interaction. For *Jewel* (2010), a video installation commissioned for Mathaf: The Arab Museum of Modern Art, the artist sought to produce a work that, whereas marked by certain social signifiers specific to Cairo (those specifying class, vocation, location), also provides a “portrait of history” which manifests at a remove from unfolding historical experience (New Museum 2012: 151). The physical parameters of *Jewel* alone ensure that the viewer’s experience is bracketed from the everyday. A 6 min 30 s video accompanied by a music track composed and produced by the artist in the *Sha*ʿ*bi* genre (a popular form of synthesizer-heavy dance music associated with the Egyptian underclass), it is installed in a darkened and enclosed room. As the first harsh strains of melody start up, the video opens with an image of a luminescent fish swimming in the inky deep. Quickly replaced by a mechanical equivalent – a rotating loudspeaker adorned with a fish motif in flashing lights – the fish becomes a suspended centerpiece for an otherwise unfurnished room. The camera pans out to reveal two men dancing with startling abandon on its either side. Their physical typologies and cheap clothing conform to that of the Cairene working class, yet their movements conform to nothing even remotely familiar from the daily grind. Using motions that seem both directed and improvised, the men execute an unchoreographed choreography. Their faces remain impassive, but their arms flap, arc, and push with ecstatic rhythm (Figure 51.2).

The abstracted nature of the dance behavior on display in *Jewel* is apparent to the viewer even without recourse to the additional notes offered in the piece’s wall texts. Khan has realized his composition outside the conventions of naturalistic *vérité*. *Jewel* constitutes its viewers (who sit inside a black box), the viewed (who dance within a nondescript interior space), and a trance-like music (emitted from a black box) without explicit reference to any place and time. As a result, none of the observable motions in the video seem to be guided by an internal purpose. The heavy drum beat “speaks” and bodies “move” without any easily articulated reason. Khan’s concept sketches for the piece, reproduced in the *Mathaf* exhibition catalogue, provide a more explicit statement of the artist’s intentions. They propose, for example, that the suspended speaker can be seen as a symbol of cycles of social control and its loss, connoting the “dark messy stuff that exists both in and between people” as well as its mechanized manipulation – energy which may

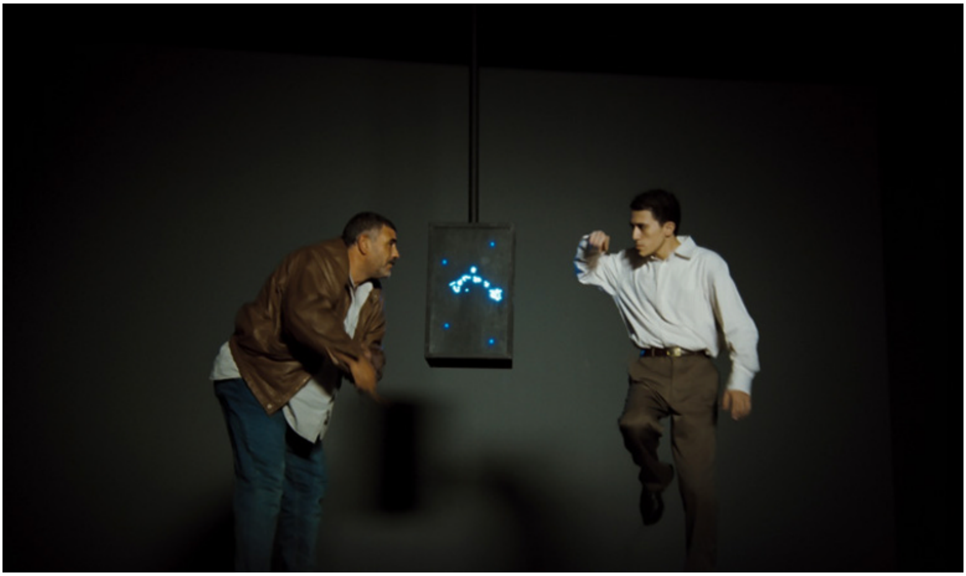

FIGURE 51.2 Hassan Khan, *Jewel*, 2010, 35 mm film transferred to FULL HD video, original music by the artist, suspended screen, projector, audio system, room painted according to certain specifications, 6 min 30 s. Source: Artwork © Hassan Khan, image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Reproduced with permission.

periodically be unleashed through an encounter with hallucinogenic strobe lights (Mathaf Arab Museum of Modern Art 2010: 169). Khan's notes also identify one precedent for the choreography that contrasts sharply with the joyful aspect of the video: street violence in Cairo between 2005 and 2010. In the catalogue, the artist reproduces a photograph he found online that shows a group of undercover police in working-class clothing assaulting actual working-class Cairenes wearing the same type of clothing. Such incidents of police brutality against citizens, which were obscured from regular view by design, demonstrate the deceptiveness of outward social appearances. They inscribed a dynamic of reward and humiliation on the populace, even while they maintained an illusion of tight homo-social bonds. Were these violent movements removed from their originating context, the artist suggests in his notes, they might "look a lot like dance" (ibid.). An initial motivation in the artist's composition of *Jewel*, then, was a desire to speak of social violence and bonds without sermons, easy remedies, fetishizing violence, or moral prescription. By creating a coherent scene without any named or really existing subjects within it, Khan has condensed the dynamics of life around him into a disquietingly value-neutral tableau.

Walid Raad's multistaged installation *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: A History of Art in the Arab World* takes on an even more diffuse social apparatus as its point of inquiry into contemporaneity: the art world itself, particularly the recent, rapid development of an infrastructure for the arts in cities like Abu Dhabi,

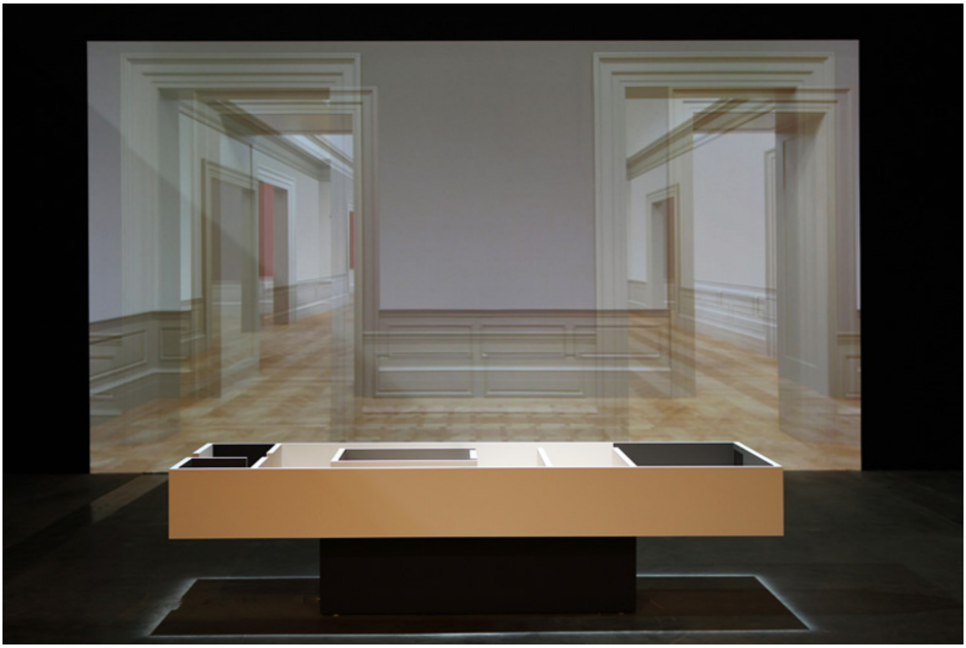

Figure 51.3 Walid Raad, *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow*, 2007–ongoing, mixed media. Source: Artwork © Walid Raad. Reproduced with permission.

Beirut, Cairo, Doha, Istanbul, and Sharjah. In a concise, smartly composed artist's statement – replete with the poetically ambiguous titles for which he is now famous – Raad sets up the project as a reflection on these developments and, in particular, their material effects on access to artistic form. The first installment thus far, "Part I, Volume I, Chapter I: Beirut (1992–2005)," often includes the following components: a dollhouse-sized gallery containing a miniature survey of his own earlier oeuvre, "The Atlas Group (1989–2004)"; a list of publications and dissertation titles on modern art in Lebanon; a full-scale *trompe l'oeil* reproduction of a 2006 installation, *Love is Blind*, by the Lebanese artist, Walid Sadek; the white walls and plaster moldings of a Lebanese contemporary art museum yet to be constructed; newspaper clippings of exhibition reviews in Beirut from the 1960s and 1970s, reproduced in miniature and tacked to a wall as if a makeshift display; and an extensive horizontal list of names of modern Lebanese artists in white vinyl press-on text (against a white wall) that itself comprises a minimalist installation (Figure 51.3). Each component constructs a set of anticipated formats for the production and circulation of contemporary art in the region, and then places visitors into confrontation with the meagerness of their dimensions. For example, the seemingly endless horizon of artist names – made both visible and invisible against the physical wall of the art institution – subtly undermines the current art world obsession with scavenged historical information.

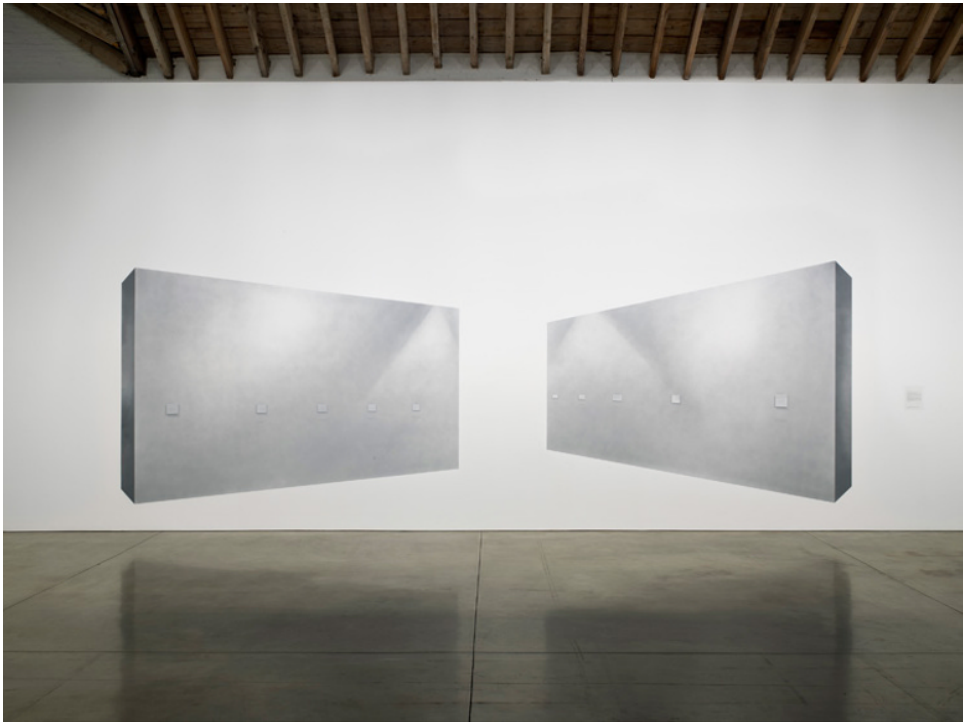

FIGURE 51.4 Installation view of Walid Raad, *On Walid Sadek's Love is Blind (Modern Art*, Oxford, 2006), 2009, acrylic paint. Source: Artwork © Walid Raad, courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Reproduced with permission.

Perhaps the most poignant of these meditations on the dubious quality of resurrected tradition is Raad's "re-installation" of his colleague Walid Sadek's installation *Love is Blind*, itself a paradoxical homage to Moustafa Farroukh, a forbear of Lebanese painterly modernism and the artist responsible for one of Lebanon's first public exhibitions of easel painting in 1927 (Figure 51.4). Sadek's 2006 piece was composed of exhibition labels for Farroukh's landscape paintings, which he installed without the actual paintings as a conceptual conceit that both recovered an earlier beaux-arts history and refused to render it fully visible. Raad's reworking of the piece as a paint-to-order illusion pushes Sadek's historiographical query about the connections between artistic generations (or lack thereof) to its logical limit. With even the material presence of the walls and labels eliminated, nothing inhabitable remains. Indeed, a sensibility of epistemic rupture motivates the whole of *Scratching on Things.* As the work flirts with disavowing the existence of the very material it puts on display, it articulates a deep ambivalence toward the future museum and market projects that are its impetus. The archival impulses of the art industry are rendered into a set of dumb and mute objects.

Globalized Convergences

Several key characteristics of the contemporary art world in general may be elucidated through a closer look at Raad as an artist whose career trajectory moves between an intimate intellectual community in Beirut and the transnational markets of the global art world. Since the late 1990s, Raad has worked within the global circuits of publications, biennials, festivals, and mega-exhibitions that sustain the contemporary art world. In the Arab world, such circuits are most visible in the new cultural initiatives undertaken in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as well as Qatar, each an oil-rich entity that is fully enmeshed in the financialized global economy. Of all the constructions that have been proposed, the Saadiyat Island project in Abu Dhabi represents the most ambitious. Once built, the island will house a raft of new museums, including a Louvre Abu Dhabi and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. For Arab artists and their careers, the effect of these museums will be tangible. The curatorial mandate for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, for example, includes a commitment to collecting and contemporary Middle Eastern art. And yet, even as artists such as Raad negotiate the big business of art and its promotion, they also produce and circulate their work within the more immediate communities that have long provided a meaningful and sustained definition for their practice. As this section aims to demonstrate, it is precisely the multiple scales of infrastructure operating together in the region that constitute contemporary art today.

Raad developed his first highly acclaimed project, which reflected on the legacies of the Lebanese civil war, under the auspices of a fictitious agency called the Atlas Group created in 1999. These Atlas Group videos and performances primarily explored the fugitive nature of the archival record of the war's effects, often by subtly undermining its purportedly documentary forms of representation. The project first emerged from a very particular set of local initiatives. Immediately after the 1990 Taif accords, which declared an official end to the civil war, a number of artists, performers, architects, and writers in Beirut organized a series of conversations, collaborations, projects, and exhibitions that were deeply concerned with the role of art in the aftermath of the war, which to many Lebanese seemed far from over. The experimental and politically engaged practices of this first generation of contemporary postwar artists found important platforms in the launch of several local cultural organizations and festivals such as Ashkal Alwan, the Beirut Theater, and the Ayloul Festival. These organizations, all founded in the 1990s, matured along with the artists and provided an alternative to what was at that time an otherwise gallery-dominated market favoring sellable painting and sculpture.

By 2003, the art world's perceptions of Beirut's lack of established art institutions took an important turn as these artists' interest in their city's precariousness captured the imaginations of foreign critics and curators. These observers saw Beirut as a "proto-institutional" setting for artistic production, reading its liminal status as both an unfortunate product of a war-torn history and a fortunate promise of alternatives to institutional norms. The critic Stephen Wright, for example, suggested that the bourgeois European art world conceived as a "relatively autonomous sphere, structured and governed by its own specific logic" was simply not maintained in the Middle East, such that artists instead implemented their skills in an "extra-artistic, extra-disciplinary sphere" (Wright 2006: 58). The scene's marginality seemed to provide a source of effective political critique, one with the potential to remain effective even in exhibitions outside Lebanon (Cotter 2006; David 2003; Wright 2002).

As curatorial keywords, concepts like "proto-institutionality" and "marginality" require further unpacking in relation to the structure of the contemporary art world. One of the first exhibitions to make the recuperation of marginal global content its *raison d'être* was the 1989 *Magiciens de la Terre* exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. It remains a controversial precedent. Assembled by the curator Jean-Hubert Martin on the occasion of France's bicentennial, the exhibition proposed to highlight the hybrid art objects common to the vast majority of the world other than France. To pursue this goal, Martin posited an alternative formulation of artistry as a human act, as the product of a magician who makes images in the world, not a fully autonomous artist who represents it. Although apparently well intentioned, the exhibition's emphasis on the exotic and the otherworldly met with vociferous critique. Rather than liberate art from its Eurocentric confines, it fetishized non-Western identity as a compensation for Western deficiencies. Yet if Martin's attempt to reformulate ideas of artistry as a site of enchantment proved unsatisfactory, his guiding supposition that curators can and should intervene in conversations about what it means to be globally contemporary did gain traction. Curators emerged as the dominating voice in the art world's own self-definition in the 1990s, when arguments about art began to be crafted through entire exhibitions rather than single artworks (Smith 2010: 372).

Concomitant with the re-scripting of the roles of artists, curators, and exhibitions, the preferred exhibition format also underwent a transformation in the 1990s, with the biennial emerging as a paradigm for a globalized art world. The term "biennial" refers to a type of recurring, large-scale contemporary art exhibition to which a single city or commissioning region plays host on a fixed periodical schedule (bi-annually, tri-annually, or some other interval). The first international art biennial, the Venice Biennale, was established 1895, with the next set of biennials emerging in the 1950s, and the most dramatic proliferation occurring after 1989, with the new and largely transnational forms of cultural tourism that emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Currently, Moscow, Liverpool, Bucharest, Taipei, Thessaloniki, Lyon, Johannesburg, Cairo, Istanbul, Berlin, and Havana all host biennials. With the biennial format now promising far more than a mere exhibition, commissioning cities tend to hire a guest curator or curatorial team with the hope of creating a destination event. These curators distribute selected artworks across a vast viewing territory (including existing museums, public squares, and formerly neglected historical sites), with the viewing experience itself becoming as important as any individual piece (Jones 2010).

In recent years, art world actors have begun to hotly debate the relative worth of "biennial culture," that is, the global circuit of these recurring exhibitions through which artists, audiences, and tastes become increasingly interlinked in an experience-based economy (Filipovic *et al.* 2010). For supporters, the biennial structure not only accommodates experimental practices better than Enlightenment-era museum models based upon authority and canonization but also allows for flexible adaptation in multiple locales as well as space for art that enacts a critique of the effects of imperialism and globalization (Smith 2010: 380). For the detractors of biennial culture, however, its more populist promises prove elusive. For some, the contemporary biennial can bear a troubling resemblance to Disneyland in its promotion of spectacle. For others, the expansion of the biennial circuit's reach only accentuates the global class divide as the hyper-privileged elite enjoy the means to travel around to the latest artistic node.

In terms of contemporary art world engagement with the Arab world in particular, we find a key link between Arab artists and the "biennialized" art circuit in the activities of the French curator Catherine David. A curator who has long professed a commitment to presenting artistic practices in their full sociopolitical engagement, David gained notoriety in 1997 for her stewardship of Documenta, a high-profile contemporary art exhibition held every five years in Kassel, Germany. Because it privileged intellectual content over spectacular presentation, the biennial polarized art world opinion. David subsequently turned to identify the Arab world in particular as a site of pronounced political tensions as well as a source of exemplary aesthetic practices that engaged them, ultimately launching the exhibition and publication series *Tamáss: Contemporary Arab Representations* in Beirut in 2002. After the Beirut publication, David organized iterations of her project in Cairo in 2003, the Venice Biennale in 2003, and, in 2006, a project about Iraq. Her interviews and statements on the project all articulate a need to tackle antagonistic and conflictive situations and contexts rather than confine oneself to those around which there is consensus. For this purposefully polemical approach to research-based curatorship, the work of the postwar Lebanese artists performed particularly well. Not only was the official end of the Lebanese civil war in 1989 coincident with the beginnings of a celebratory globalism in the art world, but also, after the events of September 11, 2001, there was a perceived need in Europe for a compelling counterpoint to the impulse to demonize the Arab world (David and Rogoff 2004: 8).

There is now wide recognition that the global art world operates in some form in nearly every major city in the world, even if this fact is not always embraced. It even flourishes in those locations understood to otherwise remain inimical to Western capital markets and interests. As the curator and writer Tirdad Zolghadr reported in 2007, Tehran too boasts the hallmarks of a networked global art world, in the fully clubby and exclusive "double-espresso, witty-installation-titles, 'are-you-coming-to-the-opening' sense of the term" (2007: 443). When implemented elsewhere than the biennial circuit, however, the distinction between modern and contemporary art often requires reassessment. These changing requirements become particularly apparent when entirely new institutions are founded, as in the case of Mathaf: The Arab Museum of Modern Art, which opened in Doha, Qatar, in 2010. The first museum with a modern and contemporary purview to open in the Gulf, the strategies that Mathaf curators adopted for its inaugural exhibition sequence not only addressed practical questions about space and audience but also enacted a significant intervention in current market categories, for the museum's acquisitions consolidated a certain roster of artists under the classification "Arab." Moreover, the tripartite exhibition program with which it opened in fact proposed almost no connections at all either between the categories of modern and contemporary, or with Islamic artifacts. *Sajjil: A Century of Modern Art*, a loosely thematic 200-piece sampling drawn from the permanent collection of work from the whole of the twentieth century, favored the art object and its aura and gave no space to "new media" like video art or even photography. By contrast, a second exhibition, *Told, Untold, Retold*, featured 23 contemporary works that had been newly commissioned from acclaimed artists from the Arab world and diaspora (including Hassan Khan and Walid Raad), most room-sized pieces requiring extensive installation. Finally, a third show conformed to the diachronic notion of the artistic career rather than a synchronic survey. Inviting five still-living master artists from an older generation to realize their own new works, the museum situated the results in room-size retrospectives of each artist's oeuvre. Each of the three exhibitions was assigned a space of its own that conformed to the genre of work (easel painting versus unbounded installations). Whereas the permanent collection was installed on the interior walls of Mathaf's own building, the contemporary show and the five-artist showcase were placed side-by-side within a temporary, hangar-like structure of the kind that is often used for contemporary art fairs. The temporary structure, in turn, was sited on the grounds of the already existing (and far more visually striking) Museum of Islamic Art, designed by the architect I.M. Pei and opened in 2008 (see Watenpaugh, CHAPTER 47).

Histories of the Contemporary

We have been suggesting that the contemporary always requires a history: a set of objects and ideas that prepared the way for the appearance of the now, and against which the now appears distinctive. From the viewpoint of the curators engaged in new museum projects in the Gulf, an historical archive of verified dates, exhibition histories, and critical reactions must be constituted in order to generate interpretative guides to exhibitions, involving matching works to social contexts and artistic intentions. By contrast, for curators involved in biennials, the apparent absence of a usable past can bestow glamour upon an art scene. Ultimately, however, as the exhibition schema for Mathaf makes plain, whatever art arises from any one contemporary interest will eventually pass into a historical status, rendered out-of-sync with more pressing institutional priorities and market interests. To better think through the historiographical implications of this kind of negotiation between past and present, we need to draw insight from earlier instances of artists who devised a contemporary practice to befit sociopolitical circumstance. Here we consider three: Cairo's Contemporary Art Group, the Baghdad Group for Modern Art, and the Casablanca Group. While markedly different in their stylistic programs, these groups each proposed to see art as harboring a potential to liberate their societies from oppressors. As we will see, this positional element of their practice has come to factor significantly in the arbitration of their legacies today.

Contemporary Art Group (Cairo, Egypt, 1946–1952)

The Contemporary Art Group (CAG) (*jamaʿat al-fann al-muʿasir*) staged its first exhibition in Cairo in 1946. Its founder Hussein Youssef Amin, an intellectual and teacher, sought to encourage a new type of fine arts practitioner in Egypt, one who did not simply copy the genre categories and polished style of the Western academic style then in favor. Amin recruited talented students from the secondary schools where he taught, and the group together aimed to truthfully depict everyday life outside the rarified realm of elites. In fulfillment of their self-designation as contemporary, or of their age, they embraced popular traditions, folk signs, and religious superstition (Al-Sharuni 1966).

The decision to band together in rejection of reigning academic styles was a contemporary gesture in itself, one that had not been thinkable mere decades ago. In the 1930s and 1940s in Egypt, emergent nationalist and socialist movements had begun to challenge the legitimacy of monarchical rule (Kane 2013). Concomitantly, several different art teachers who had trained at the Higher Pedagogy Institute and who were fluent in international trends established new art groups. These groups all attempted to develop more authentic modes of modern artistic expression and experimented with the tenets of surrealism and expressionism. Whereas the artists in the CAG also made frequent use of surrealist devices, their approach to art placed more emphasis on direct engagement with life in the non-elite quarters of Cairo. They took two different tacks: depicting the conditions and beliefs of the impoverished population and producing work that would awaken people's consciousness. An early drawing by group member Abdel Hadi el-Gazzar exemplifies the CAG's approach (Figure 51.5). A sketch depicting a dervish-like folk character, the drawing's dense network of linear surface patterns – electrified scribbling, mystical tattoo motifs, plaited fabric design – unifies hair, skin, and spectral aura into one shamanistic space. Apparently constituted

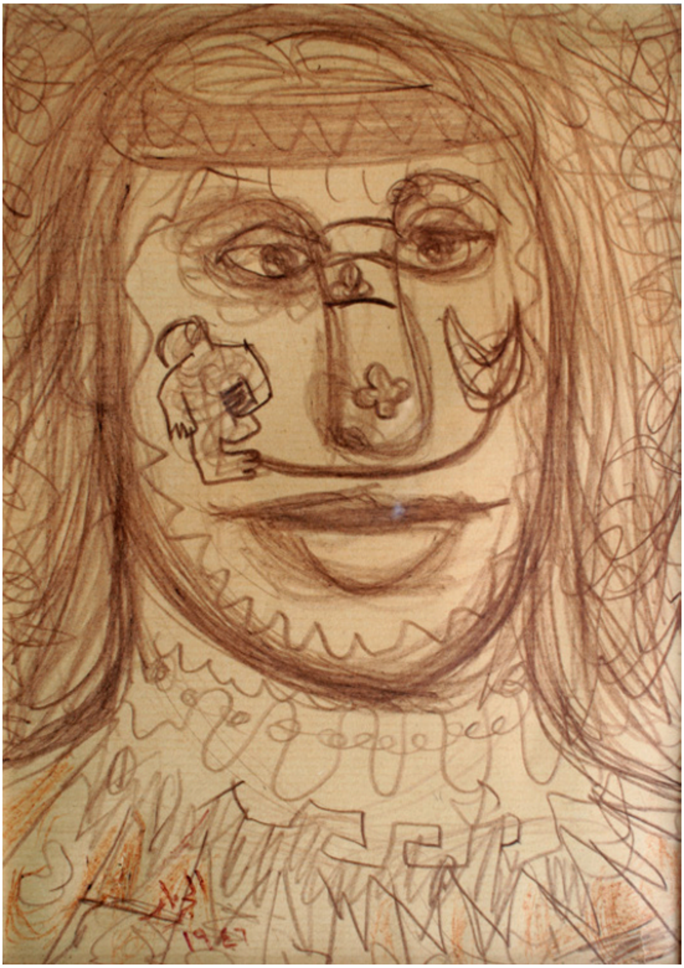

FIGURE 51.5 Abdel Hadi el-Gazzar, *Untitled (Face)*, 1946, conté crayon and colored pencil on paper, 8 × 10 in. Source: Photograph by Alexandra Seggerman, courtesy of Laila Effat Abd el Rahman. Reproduced with permission.

from the associative mysticism of the *mawlid* festivals, celebrating the Prophet Muhammad's birth, in el-Gazzar's Cairene neighborhood, the dervish is both person and an uneasy figuration of the Egyptian unconscious. In *Popular Chorus* (1948), one of el-Gazzar's most famous paintings, the artist again engages the national collective, but in this case he mounts a critique of its impoverished material condition. The work depicts nine figures of different types and stations, each facing an empty bowl. Because it enumerated a wide spectrum of starving Egyptians, contemporary audiences read the painting as a rebuke of King Farouk for his failings as a national caretaker. Officials responded by briefly incarcerating both the artist and Amin.

The CAG's articulation of contemporary art rested on the principles of artistic freedom, consciousness of class, and social commitment – principles that resonate in the art world of today. Yet for its participating artists, "freedom" did not rest primarily upon safeguarding secular subjectivity. Instead, they sought to represent and, in a certain sense, inhabit the heterodox forms of religious devotion they saw on Cairo's streets. These artists based their contemporary art upon a close relationship to popular belief as a source of inspiration and social truth.

The Baghdad Group for Modern Art (1951–c. 1971)

In 1951, nine artists (among them Jewad Selim, Shakir Hassan Al Said, and the art critic and literary figure Jabra Ibrahim Jabra) drafted a manifesto to be publicly read at the opening of the inaugural exhibition of the Baghdad Group for Modern Art (*jamaʿat baghdad lil-fann al-hadith*). Declaring an intention to forge a modern art, the artists commenced a process of cultural renewal that they explicitly oriented through a rediscovered local tradition: the "Baghdad School," a thirteenth-century style of manuscript illustration exemplified by a 1237 copy of the *Maqamat* of al-Hariri, the most popular Arabic text chosen for illustration in medieval Iraq (see Tabbaa and Contadini, CHAPTER 12 and CHAPTER 17). The manuscript was painted by the artist Yahya al-Wasiti, probably in Baghdad; since the manuscript was held by the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, Iraqi artists accessed it through reproductions published in books and magazines. In taking up this geographically localized pictorial tradition as the root source for a modern style, the Baghdad Group for Modern Art laid out a program for achieving artistic contemporaneity that emphasized connection with artistic heritage. In this, al-Wasiti provided the crucial staging ground. He also represented a sign of a golden age that had since passed, severed from the populace by foreign invasion (most obviously that of the Mongols in 1258 CE) and subsequent neglect.

In the postcolonial setting of Baghdad of the 1940s into the 1960s, other artistic collectives had also formed with the intention of developing a modern Iraqi art, but they tended to emphasize the local landscape as a focus. What distinguished the Baghdad Group for Modern Art from these other groups was its identification of technique over subject matter as the key to producing a novel art form relevant to the time. In focusing on technique as a site for needed artistic development, the Group emphasized that artistic experimentation had become a requirement for meaningful art. Whereas the Group's inaugurating manifesto announced a commitment to local heritage as a root source, it also gestured outward to the international art world. The artists of the Baghdad Group for Modern Art had already acquired training from abroad in European centers, and their manifesto named Pablo Picasso as an exemplary modern artist whose originality was rooted in open experimentation with various artistic traditions.

Jewad Selim's painting in Figure 51.6 exemplifies the Group's integrative approach to an aesthetic program. Using the fine linear construction for which he

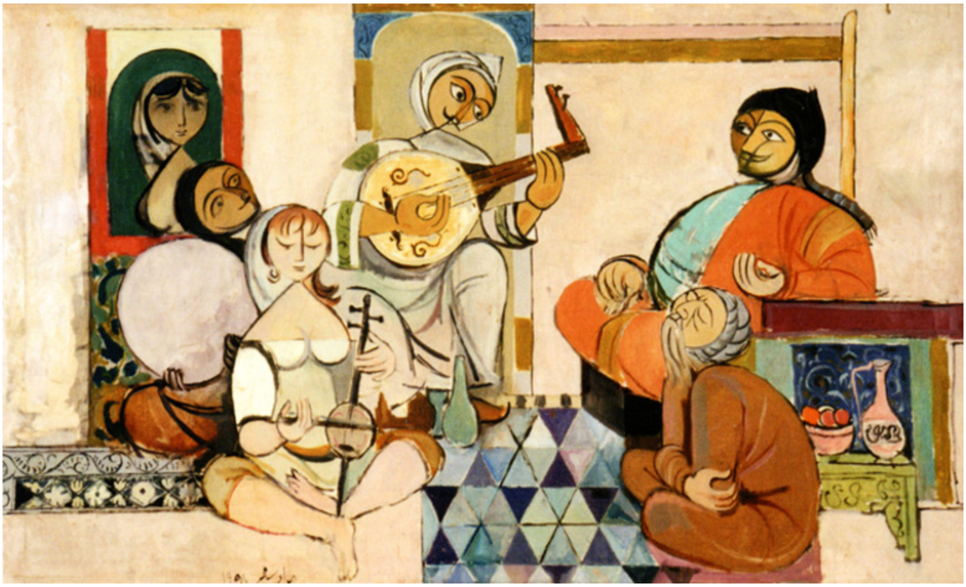

Figure 51.6 Jewad Selim, *Majlis al-Khalifa* (Caliph's Majlis), 1958, oil on canvas, 30.7 × 50 cm. State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow. Source: Photograph State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow. Reproduced with permission.

is known, Salim depicted a scene of courtly entertainment, an event that finds frequent illustration in the *Maqamat* manuscript genre. In it, he maintained a stylistic relationship with al-Wasiti's characteristic style and compositions. Both artists combined two- and three-dimensional perspectives, deploying geometrical patterning to hint at spatial recession, yet also reinforcing surface flatness through a lack of shading. Salim paid further tribute to al-Wasiti by employing animated gestures to guide the visual narrative. Yet this is hardly a pure homage, as he also deployed cubist techniques to build up the body of the female musician in the foreground with geometric segments. Certain volumetric shading techniques clearly draw on the influential aesthetic of Henri Matisse and Picasso. This openness to influence and dynamic interplay between visual languages combined with complete commitment to national progress, reflects the group's overall perception of the meaning of modernity as a state of renewal. They wanted to achieve a form of modernism that was consonant with universally modernized conditions, but they were skeptical of the need to assert radical discontinuity with their rediscovered historical precedents.

Casablanca Group (Morocco, 1964–1970)

In 1969, three Moroccan artists comprising the core of the Casablanca Group – Farid Belkahia, Mohamed Melehi, and Mohamed Chebaa – joined three others – Mohamed Ataallah, Mustapha Hafid, and Mohamed Hamidi – to

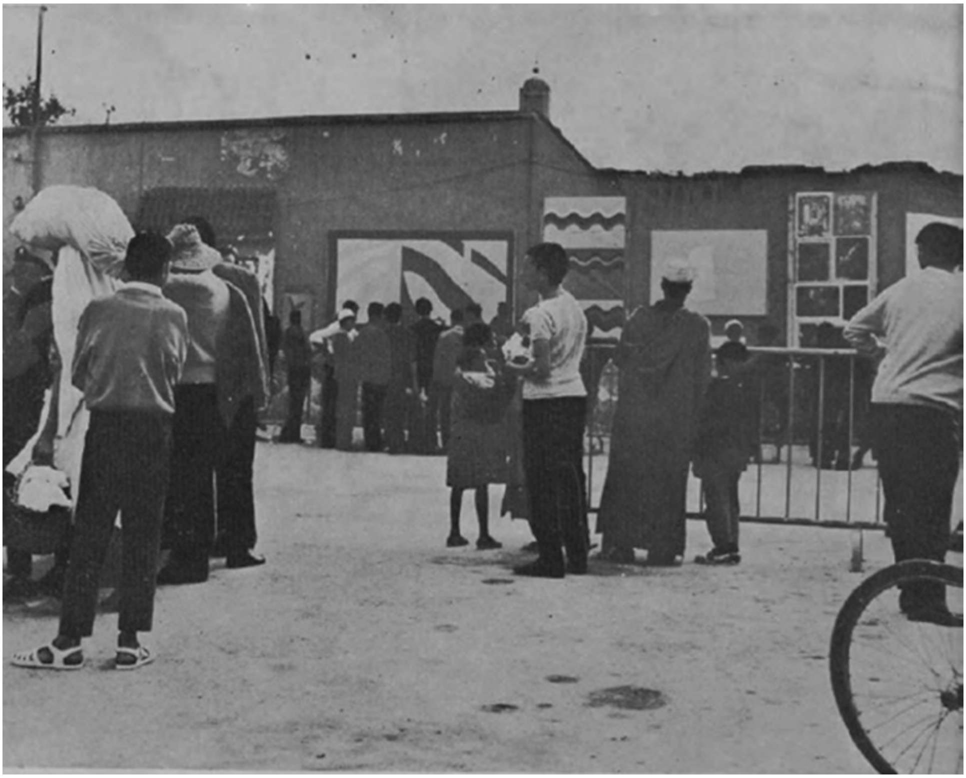

Figure 51.7 Mohamed Melehi, photograph of the 1969 outdoor painting exhibition in Jemaa el-Fna Square in Marrakech. Source: *Souffles* 4, nos. 13–14 (1969): 44. Reproduced with permission.

organize an outdoor painting exhibition in Jemaa el-Fna Square in Marrakech (Figure 51.7). Seeking to offer their artwork to people as a vehicle for intellectual and personal uplift, they selected one of the busiest and largest open squares in Morocco as their exhibition site. The artists stayed with their works during the exhibition, and, hoping to awaken "curiosity" and "critical spirit" in the populace, invited passers-by to look and respond freely in whatever way they liked (Powers 2012).

The group derived its name from the fact that it was in Casablanca in 1964 that its members first inaugurated a project to liberate the production and reception of Moroccan art. The artists were working as teachers at the School of Fine Arts there, as was critic Toni Maraini, who became an influential voice in the group. As young artists with international careers and experience, they quickly became frustrated by what they saw as the continued patriarchal domination of European mores in Moroccan society even after the country had secured its independence from France and Spain, as was exemplified by the nineteenth-century beaux-arts curriculum in place at their school. They took action, implementing curricular reforms intended to clear a space for independent creation. They rejected the divisions that European academic training had drawn between fine arts and craft. They removed the models of Greek statues used for drawing classes and put up Moroccan crafts and Arabic calligraphy. They also boycotted exhibition halls run by foreign embassies. Their revived interest in local precedents dovetailed with initiatives undertaken by other young Moroccan intellectuals in the 1960s and 1970s, who were also questioning and critiquing their own identities and cultural practices after colonialism (Irbouh 2005; Pieprzak 2010). These groups felt that decades of occupation had rendered local art forms into distant items of ethnographic study and sought to re-animate those forms within a more authentic art.

The wave pattern that can be seen in Figure 51.7 exemplifies the type of engagement with precedent that the group favored. Although its members mined existing scholarship on geometric and calligraphic elements from Islamic and indigenous traditions as inspiration, they were interested in using those inputs to develop a complete aesthetic system encompassing conceptual rules and manual techniques. For them, a compelling example of such a system came from the Arabesque, with its plastic elaboration of a synthesis of time, space, and movement, and its structural basis on a grid (Maraini 1990). Melehi in particular explored the wave motif at length, capitalizing on its equal relevance to local history and international trends. Because the wave form is an aniconic design element found in both pre-Islamic and Islamic arts, it was seen to embody the aesthetic values of the region's historical communities. Equally, because it indexes the flow of energy, it fulfilled the tenets of the kinetic and optical art movements then popular with art world tastemakers. By recovering art forms and settings that colonialism had interrupted and then fossilized, the Group aimed to revise the historical context for its contemporary art: they boldly claimed an alternative to the unilinear history that Western art scholarship had imposed upon them.

From an institutional standpoint, the significance of each of these movements has been already secured. The permanent collection of Mathaf features works from all three, and each has found recognition from national narratives as well as English-language survey publications. But how might we understand the contemporary import of their histories for new scholars, museums, collectors, or artists? For one, we must recognize that the artists' groups chronicled here embarked upon their artistic projects through a critique of stark differentials between dominant powers and a dominated populace. Vanguard art movements in the region almost always emerged within a history of politicized cultural critique. Indeed, artists worldwide in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere have originated postcolonial cultural projects through the powerful and productive impulse to redress inequities. These practices by design exceed the bounds of the strictly aesthetic. As such, they rarely conform to the ideal of aesthetic autonomy that American and European critics prized in the 1950s, and which gave shape to the analytical tools for the study of modern art in academe. The art historians who engage with these histories of modern art have had to enact monumental interventions in their discipline, excavating both other formations of modernism *and* their connection to decolonization struggles. Nada Shabout's 2007 book *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics* constitutes one such effort.

The first art historical attempt to engage the category of "Arab art" as a unified whole, Shabout's book proposes to take modern Arab art on its own terms as "art produced by those who consider themselves part of the Arab world" (2007: 3). In other words, Shabout understands the qualities of "modern" and "Arab" not as inherent properties of artworks but rather as outcomes of the artist's self-fashioning within the modern political project of Arab nationalism. Such a formulation accurately reflects the conceptualization of Arab art developed through state-centric patronage in the second half of the twentieth century. These efforts include the exhibitions of Lebanese and Arab artists for the 1948 UNESCO General Conference held in Beirut; the surveys of the region's artists by the Beirut-based, pan-Arabist journal *al-Adab* in the 1950s; the institution of the umbrella organization General Union of Arab Artists in 1972–1973 (formed with the hope of securing underwriting from the Arab League); and the regional biennials for "Arab art" created in Cairo (1984) and Sharjah (1993) prior to the current biennial boom. Each found its articulation through a politically motivated doctrine of self-realization and self-sovereignty through difference.

One of the most significant methodological challenges for writing a historical account of today's globalizing art world is precisely this history of artists who emphatically articulate difference between one originating sociocultural context and another. For example, given the strongly nationalist element of artistic discourse in the region, the Casablanca Group's 1969 interest in audience participation challenges most shorthand characterizations of "modern" concerns versus "contemporary" ones. Like many other artists around the world had begun to do in the late 1960s, their exhibition in Marrakech's Jemaa el-Fna announced a break with the idealized integrity of the modern art object and redefined the contemporary field of art as a contingent and discursive one. In this sense, they shared artistic concerns with other artists on multiple continents who had also linked up student and labor movements and also argued that contemporary art needed to escape its own deadening institutional space. However, whereas the Casablanca Group was cognizant of the possibility of achieving international solidarity with its exhibition tactics (several members were involved in international networks of leftist thought and action), its anti-museum stance can hardly be said to reflect a fully global convergence. After all, their foremost goal was to realize their art's liberation from foreign influence.

Out of the many ongoing efforts to negotiate these kinds of splits between shareable concepts and non-shareable contexts, Okwui Enwezor stands out as an influential voice. As he has argued for over a decade, the "radical political strategies and social and cultural transformations" inaugurated after World War II warrant serious critical attention, for the most significant events of the twentieth century are the national decolonization movements and their philosophical contestation of Western imperialism (Enwezor 2001: 10; Enwezor 2008: 213). In his work as a leading curator and theorist, Enwezor has repeatedly endorsed the biennial system's capacity to extend postcolonial critique into the art world, arguing that the proliferation and mutation of biennials makes it possible to forge new networks between spheres of production that would otherwise remain separate. Under this rubric of postcolonial critique, a critical edge may even be restored to the Arab heritage motifs that dominated the nationalized art scenes of the Arab world. In fact, Enwezor's first major museum show in 2001, *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994*, featured the cultural discourse of pan-Arabism under Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser as a piece of the vibrant political history of artistic production in Africa in these decades.

Other resurrections of the Arab arts as a sign of a critical identity politics meet with more skeptical reactions, however. One current anxiety has to do with the effects of the unidirectional flow of artistic goods sparked by museum projects in the Gulf. As we saw, the Qatar Museums Authority not only spent enormous amounts of money on Arab modernism at auctions but also commissioned elaborate new works from top contemporary artists in the Arab world. Unlike the collecting policies for the state museums of modern Turkey and Iran, however, in which items by Turkish and Iranian artists may be acquired in an ostensibly natural and continuous relationship between institutions, patrons, and creators, Qatar's acquisitions involved collecting works from outside its current borders *as if* they were its own heritage pieces. The legacy of cultural Arabism as a political position makes such a claim possible. However, popular belief in the viability of Arabism as a platform for cultural liberation has long since passed away (if it ever truly existed). For example, the art historian Clare Davies recently suggested that Qatar's support for Arab artists in Egypt seems less a sincere expression of transnational kinship and more a cover for its more questionable foreign policies, such as its funding of Islamist parties in Egypt's 2011–2012 parliamentary elections (Davies 2012). In other words, given current economic conditions, when a wealthy oil-producing country professes a commitment to pan-Arab commonalities and presents itself as a benevolent regional patron, the appearance of largesse may also obscure the inequities of the patronage power relation. Far from a matter of solidarity, the new question is whether artists and curators who accept an entity's money in support of art can legitimately oppose that entity's actions in other realms.

Ruptures within the Contemporary

As these anxieties about Qatari patronage seem to suggest, no matter how successfully the art world's many sectors produce new types of market value, their expansion does not always hold up seamlessly. This is an important point for any historical analysis. Recently, two particularly illuminating breaks appeared in the order of things: a 2011 controversy at the Sharjah Biennial and a 2011 artist boycott of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

The 2011 Sharjah Biennial, curated by Suzanne Cotter, Rasha Salti, and the associate curator Haig Aivazian, is now best remembered for events that happened a month after its opening: the Emirate removed an installation by the Algerian artist and writer Mustapha Benfodil from its site in Sharjah's Heritage Square, a public courtyard adjacent to a mosque, because it determined it to be in violation of its blasphemy laws. Benfodil's work, *Maportaliche/Ecriture Sauvages* (It Has No Importance/Wild Writings), consisted of two soccer teams of headless mannequins arranged in a face-off within a courtyard space. Onto their uniforms, the artist printed texts from Algerian pop culture as well as texts from his play *Les Borgnes*, which takes as its subject a young woman's experience of kidnapping and physical and sexual violence in prison during the Algerian civil war of the 1990s. On the walls surrounding the courtyard, he added painted slogans from the protests that had recently taken place in Tunisia and Egypt. He also introduced voiced texts through surrounding sound speakers. According to the official reports that eventually trickled out, members of the local community were angered by the texts in the piece that mixed words from the Qur'an with profanities, and demanded its removal (Al-Qasimi 2012: 95). These residents came to the site not as audiences for art but rather as worshippers visiting the mosque beside it.

For Salti and Aivazian, the curators who had worked with Benfodil on the work, the Emirate's decision to remove the work represented a condemnable act of censorship. However, as the ensuing controversy played out, it quickly extended beyond the issue of free artistic expression to also bring scrutiny upon the "rules of Sharjah," that is, the requirements for doing business with an Emirate governed by a leader who exercises broad power based on hereditary rights and who does not recognize a Western liberal contract of government. For not only was the piece swiftly removed but Jack Persekian, a curator who had overseen the several previous years of Sharjah programming, was removed overnight from his post as director of the Sharjah Art Foundation and art director of the Sharjah Biennial too. Within 48 hours, Salti and Aivazian responded by drafting an online petition – soon signed by nearly 2000 artists, curators, scholars, and critics – that condemned the summary dismissal as well as the removal of the piece. Its signatories agreed to boycott all activities of the Sharjah Art Foundation until a public acknowledgment of the incident be made, and guarantees concerning the intellectual sovereignty of the Foundation's work be secured. As worded, the boycott attempted to hold the Sharjah Art Foundation to several different art world conventions: open debate with the expectation of majority rule; liberty of artistic debate; and intellectual sovereignty. Yet, in a twist that surprised many who expected to stand in solidarity with Persekian, the former director made it known that he had neither authorized the petition nor supported the boycott's premise.

Proposing that "respectful dialogue and routine interactions" always proved more effective mechanisms for change, he effectively undermined the attempt at art world solidarity (Toukan 2011).

For artists in the region, the Sharjah Biennial currently performs a crucial service. As a non-commercial venture with an ambition to provide meaningful support to both regional and global art scenes, it provides critical funding and exposure for experimental and critical practices that might otherwise be lost to conventional market interests. The 2011 Biennial had even been conceived around a notion of art as a form of critical engagement with sociopolitical realities. Thus, the debates that the controversy sparked over the relative rights of artists, curators, and sponsors raised the question not only of the limits that a setting like the United Arab Emirates places on artists but also of the limits of contemporary art as a space for critical engagement at all (Toukan 2011). For example, at the same time as the Biennial's opening festivities, the UAE government was actually engaged in assisting the Bahraini government in suppressing civilian protests. As Biennial guests toasted the event's critical engagements, the United Arab Emirates contributed troops to the cause of muzzling dissent. A few attendees in Sharjah did stage protest actions, but they were quickly taken into custody and their protest hardly registered with the majority of attendees. Soon, the firing of Persekian would completely overshadow any potential debate on the Emirate's military action. Heightened politics in the art world often mark failures in activism.

In the same month, a second boycott also challenged the fitness of the United Arab Emirates as a patron of the arts, albeit from a different angle, that of exploited labor. On March 17, 2011, a group of artists, curators, and writers, formally organized under the name Gulf Labor, released a call to action to boycott the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi over migrant worker rights on Saadiyat Island. In a letter addressed to Richard Armstrong, director for the Guggenheim Foundation and Museum, the signatories demanded that the Foundation obtain contractual guarantees to protect the rights of workers employed in the construction of its new branch in Abu Dhabi. Written by artists who felt they "may be asked to work with the museum," the letter refused to accept any future invitations, stating, "no one should be asked to exhibit or perform in a building that has been constructed and maintained on the backs of exploited employees." This, the public announcement of the boycott, had come after a year of private meetings between signatory artists Walid Raad and Emily Jacir, Guggenheim representatives Armstrong and Nancy Spector (deputy director and chief curator), and representatives from Human Rights Watch. The artists ultimately made the decision to announce the boycott publicly when they felt the responsible parties failed to address a number of issues. In particular, although the company in charge of developing Saadiyat Island, the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Development Investment Company (TDIC), named the UK-based firm PricewaterhouseCoopers as a third-party monitor, that firm did not appear on the list of independent monitors approved by Human Rights Watch. The boycott has remained active, and has also branched into additional pathways of activism. In October 2013, the Gulf Labor group took further steps to highlight the inequalities that sustain the purportedly enlightened museum by launching "52 Weeks," an initiative that, every week for a year, collects a new work, text, or action engaging the living conditions of migrant laborers from another artist and circulates it to the global art world via social media. A subgroup of Gulf Labor members formed under the name Global Ultra Luxury Faction (GULF) in February 2014, and began to stage protests inside Guggenheim buildings and events in New York. Relations between Gulf Labor and representatives of both the TDIC and Guggenheim quickly became more strained, however, leading to breakdowns in direct communication. Very recently, on April 13, 2016, the Guggenheim announced that it would no longer negotiate with Gulf Labor on these issues of worker conditions. In response, Gulf Labor has stated that it will not only continue to uphold the boycott of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi but will also continue its advocacy through an alliance of NGOs devoted to struggles for workers rights.

The higher ideals that these two petitions call upon represent different types of activism within the contemporary art world. The authors of the Sharjah petition place an obligation upon the Sharjah Art Foundation to engage in an open dialogue, and its signatories understood that they were appealing to the Emirate's presumed self-interest in maintaining credibility among the art community. Gulf Labor's boycott on the other hand articulates its demands within a discourse of human rights, a class of inalienable rights understood to supersede Abu Dhabi's local labor law. The effort bypasses the question of local sensitivities and dialogue and instead seeks protection on behalf of a population of guest workers who otherwise labor outside any system of local law. Nonetheless, the Sharjah and the Gulf Labor petitions do hold one key assumption in common: the possibility of a global art world that operates beyond the religious or economic specificities of any one single place, and that not only speaks a communal language but also upholds shared values. In this way, no matter how critical these campaigns may be in their intention, they both remain well within the bounds of "contemporary art," a system which interpolates only particular art histories, prefers certain types of experiences, and often places pressure upon artists, works of art, and institutions to conform to certain standards.

Conclusion

This chapter argued for understanding "the contemporary" as a contingent rather than strictly temporal category, one with articulated parameters that shift in history. The contemporary today, as we put forth, relies not on any particular choice of medium or aesthetics but rather on factors like the predominant exhibition frameworks of the globalized art world, the interest assumed by curators (in addition to the artists and critics) in making arguments about what art means, and "the pre-histories of the contemporary" in the non-West that offer models of exemplary critical engagement with the world. As a kind of case study, the intersection of transnational art trends and the Arab world provides insight into several different, co-existing circuits: highly marketed, large-scale productions *and* locally intimate, grassroots organizations and projects. Perhaps a key characterization of the contemporary in the region is that artists continually move between seemingly opposed structures of support, in effect enabling the global convergences that they may otherwise seek to oppose. Of course, the effects of these convergences require constant negotiation as well, and by that process, any definition of global contemporary art must be continually marked as contingent and provisional. If the globalized art world now carries artists, artworks, viewers, and ideas across a transnational landscape, the parameters for a fully shareable cultural exchange continue to evade implementation.

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